

WHOSE SON?

Matthew 22:41-46

This is the Word of the Lord.

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, **42** saying, “What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?”

They said to Him, “The son of David.”

43 He said to them, “Then how does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying, **44** ‘YAHWEH SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET”’?

45 Therefore if David calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?”

46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question. (Matthew 22:41–46, 2022 LSB)

Thus says the Lord.

Let’s pray.

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

Matthew 22:41-42

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, **42** saying, “What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?” They said to Him, “The son of David.” (Matthew 22:41–42, 2022 LSB)

It’s been common in Matthew to see the Pharisees and other leaders confronting Jesus, questioning Him, testing Him, and trying to trick Him into giving them a reason to condemn Him publicly.

Jesus turns the tables and asks them a question for once.

Understand that He is not asking them what they think about *Him*; it's clear they don't believe that He is the Christ, the Messiah. He wants to know what they think in a general, theological sense.

And understand that He isn't asking for His own sake. He already knows what they think.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are uncovered and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we have an account to give. (Hebrews 4:13, 2022 LSB)

24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, 25 and because He had no need that anyone bear witness concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. (John 2:24–25, 2022 LSB)

By asking this, He brings their rebellion and unbelief out into the open.

What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?

This question might be familiar to you. Jesus asked His disciples the same question with slightly different wording in Matthew 16.

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, saying, “Who do PEOPLE say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” (Matthew 16:13–14, 2022 LSB)

And then,

15 He said to them, “But who do YOU say that I am?” 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:15–16, 2022 LSB)

So the question Jesus asks the Pharisees is the question of questions, the question that matters.

GOD'S CHOSEN SERVANT

Isaiah 42:1-7

Now, what does “the Christ” mean?

That sounds like a strange way to phrase it; “the Christ.” It sounds like saying “the Greg” or “the Linda.” But “Christ” is not a name; it’s a title. It means “Anointed One” in Greek, just as “Messiah” means “Anointed One” in Hebrew. Jesus Christ is Jesus THE CHRIST.

In biblical terms, God anoints that which belongs to Him, whether things or people. He commanded Moses to anoint the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle, and all its contents. He also commanded Moses to anoint Aaron and his sons as priests. The anointing was a sign that God had chosen and claimed and appointed all of those items and people as His own unique possession. The Tabernacle was His, the Ark was His, the altar was His, and Aaron and his priestly line were His. He had already chosen them and claimed them; the anointing was a sign to people that those things and individuals had been chosen and already belonged to God.

In Isaiah 42 we see that Yahweh promises to send His Servant:

1 “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold;
My chosen one in whom My soul is well-pleased.
I have put My Spirit upon Him;

Two things to remember.

First, the Lord commanded Moses and others to anoint with oil as a symbol of His ownership of those things and people. But God Himself anoints with His Holy Spirit.

Second, it was not the anointing with oil that made the Ark or Tabernacle, or Aaron and his sons, God’s unique possessions. He had already claimed them. Anointing them with oil was a public declaration that they belong to Him.

The Yahweh goes on in Isaiah 42 to describe the ministry of Jesus as it would unfold.

In Matthew 3 Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptized. At that moment, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him from heaven as God anointed Jesus publicly. That is not when Jesus became the Son of God; He had always been God's Son. That was when God publicly declared Jesus to be His Son and His Chosen Servant. To make sure that no one missed it, the Father even spoke from heaven:

17 and behold, there was a voice out of the heavens saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." (**Matthew 3:17, 2022 LSB**)

There is no time to talk about it today, but the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost – today is Pentecost Sunday on the church calendar, by the way – was God's way of publicly anointing the apostles and all believers as His own, unique, precious children and servants. They were not saved that day or made special that day but publicly marked as His own.

Now, with what is written in Isaiah 42 and elsewhere, every person in Israel – certainly every Pharisee and religious leader – should have known that God's Chosen One – the Messiah, the Christ – would be a righteous ruler, tender and kind, full of grace and truth, who would establish God's Kingdom over the entire earth, guided by God the Father, whose blood would be the source of the New Covenant, and who would bring spiritual life and prosperity to those dead in sin and under God's judgment. And God publicly anointed Jesus so that there was no mistake about Him: THIS is My Beloved Son!

So, with all of that as a foundation, Jesus asks the Pharisees,

42 "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" (**Matthew 22:42, 2022 LSB**)

THE WRONG ANSWER

Matthew 22:42

42 They said to Him, "The son of David." (**Matthew 22:42, 2022 LSB**)

They snap back quickly with an answer that is technically correct but practically wrong.

They meant that the Christ would be physically descended from David, which is not as impressive as you might think. David had several sons. By the first century, he probably had thousands of living descendants. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was a son of David. While their answer sounds patriotic and spiritual, it's really as generic as it could be. The Christ, the Messiah, had to be more than the physical descendant of David.

THE RIGHT ANSWER

Matthew 22:43-45

Jesus rejects their answer by asking a follow-up question.

43 He said to them, “Then how does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying,

44 ‘YAHWEH SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET”’?

45 Therefore, if David calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?” (**Matthew 22:43–45, 2022 LSB**)

This is Jesus’ reasoning: if the Messiah is merely David’s *son*, his physical descendant, then he could never be called David’s *Lord*.

That is, if the Messiah was merely the physically descended son of David, David would not have called Him “my Lord” but “my son.” Psalm 110:1 says, “Yahweh said to my Lord,” not “Yahweh said to my son.”

In that time, as often today, Kings had dynasties. Last year Queen Elizabeth the Second died, and her son, Charles, became the King of England – Charles the Third. Did Elizabeth ever call Charles “my King”? No, of course not. When she was alive, she was the monarch. When she died, he became the monarch. There was never a time when she was alive and he was king. Does that make sense?

You see, the Christ is not merely the Son of David, although He is in fulfillment of God’s promise that one of David’s descendants would have an eternal throne. Jesus is, far more importantly, the Son of God, which means that He is Himself God in human flesh. That is why David, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, calls Him “my Lord.”

SILENCE

Matthew 22:46

46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question. **(Matthew 22:46, 2022 LSB)**

Just to be clear, others DID ask Jesus questions after this. Matthew's meaning is that no one after that tried to set Jesus up and trap Him by means of a question.

Why were they unable to respond? Why were they silent?

Well, why was Peter able to answer in Matthew 16?

15 [Jesus asked], "But who do you say that I am?" **16** And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." **(Matthew 16:15–16, 2022 LSB)**

Why was Peter able to answer the question that the Pharisees could not answer? Why could they not answer the question that Peter could answer?

17 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. **(Matthew 16:17, 2022 LSB)**

Peter could answer that way only because God the Father had revealed it to him. He had been favored by God the Father with that faith and understanding. I believe the other disciples had been as well, with the exception of Judas.

Peter's answer is that Jesus was not merely a man but the Son of the Living God – God Himself in human flesh. Jesus is Yahweh God. Now, God is triune; He is one God, but Three Persons. The Father, Son, and Spirit are all God. But the Father is not the Son or the Spirit. The Son is not the Father or the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Father or the Son. That's what Scripture reveals. Don't ask me to explain it to you; every explanation fails. But we don't have to understand the *mechanics* of a thing to believe that it is true.

So again, why was no one able, on that Tuesday during passion week, to answer the

question, “How does David call the Christ ‘my Lord?’” It was not ultimately a failure of their theology but of their faith and submission to God. The Father did not reveal the answer to them. The Holy Spirit left them in their natural state of spiritual darkness. We know that after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, and the Spirit came at Pentecost, and the apostles began preaching Christ and Him crucified and raised from the dead, that

7 ... the word of God kept on spreading, and the number of the disciples continued to multiply greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7, 2022 LSB)

So the time came when the Father did open the eyes of many of the priests by the Holy Spirit. I have to think that some of the Pharisees believed, and some of the Sadducees and the Essenes. God has saved men and women of every tribe, tongue, nation, and kindred (Revelation 5:9) for His own eternal glory.

But it was not the will of God that the leaders of Israel would believe in His Son that week. Rather it was His will that they be the primary agents of the sacrificial, substitutionary death of His Son on the cross at the hands of the Romans. I’m not guessing at this conclusion:

27 “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.” (Acts 4:27–28, 2022 LSB)

Their unbelief was part of the predetermined purpose of God to bring His own Son to grief on the cross as He died in the place of God’s people and then to raise Him from the dead in glory and victory.

BRINGING IT HOME

Who do you say Jesus Christ is? Whose Son is He?

My deep hope is that each of you would know Him personally as Lord and Savior. That

you would know the answer to the question, “What do you think of the Christ? Whose Son is He?”

I pray that your life would not contradict your answer; it’s one thing to say the words and something else entirely to believe them and be changed by them.

I pray that your understanding of Jesus was deepened today.

Philippians 2:9-11 says,

9 Therefore, God also highly exalted Him,
and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW,
of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and that EVERY TONGUE WILL CONFESS
that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father. **(Philippians 2:9–11, 2022 LSB)**

I bow my knee to the Lord Jesus Christ today; I confess today that He is Lord, God in human flesh, to the glory of God the Father. I earnestly desire that you be able to confess it as well.

The day will come when EVERY knee will bow to Jesus Christ, and EVERY tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Even those who lived in unbroken rebellion against Him will bow to Him and confess His authority. But those who wait until the day of judgment will have waited too long to be saved from judgment.

If you know Him, praise God! Stay the course and remain faithful.

If you don’t know Him, I urge you to humble yourself before Him, turn from your sins, and trust in Jesus to save you!