

The Son of David

Matthew 22:41-46

Trick question after trick question. “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” Verse 15. “In the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all [were married to] her.” Verse 28. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Verse 36. Each of those questions was designed to get Jesus into trouble, prompting him to say something which the questioner thought would cause an argument and bring harm to Jesus’ reputation by an answer which surely would have offended some group or another. Yet in each case, as we’ve seen the last three sermons, in each case Jesus used the occasion to teach a profound and timeless lesson, first about our duties to the civil government, then about the resurrection, and then about God’s moral law.

Today’s question is fourth in line, a question that addresses the very core of Jesus’ identity as the son of David. But this time, Jesus asks the question! Jesus asks the Pharisees a question intending not only to demonstrate their hypocrisy and foolishness, but even more importantly, to declare and proclaim his own nature as the second person of the trinity. He proclaims his dual nature, as fully man but also fully God. So Jesus teaches on a subject that was of great controversy in the early church, a subject that took four or five centuries for the church to fully explain in terms of the doctrines and creeds formulated to express fully and completely what the Bible teaches about the human nature and the divine nature of Jesus.

But rather than study those precise theological statements such as we find in the great creed from the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD, we come this morning to study the words of Jesus upon which that great creed was founded. We could certainly

study that creed with much benefit, as we did a bit a few months ago in the Sunday School class on church history. We could study it today, as we did when I referred to it in our study of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. You could look it up and study it on your own, and I encourage you to do so if you never have done so. The language of that creed has never been corrected or even improved upon since 451. Certainly many theologians have built upon it, filled it out with more detail, none more so than Calvin, and our own doctrinal standards from the Westminster Assembly are clearly built upon Chalcedon. But rather than study the Council of Chalcedon directly, we come this afternoon in Matthew’s gospel to Jesus’ own words, words intended to teach his disciples this very doctrine, that Jesus is both God and man, fully God and fully man. 100% man, human exactly as we are in our humanity, except he is without sin. And he is 100% God, fully and eternally God, the second person of the trinity, through whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made, as we read in John 1.

John 1:1. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God... 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

So we read,

v.41. “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “The Son of David.”

On the surface, that was a pretty simple question, a pretty easy question to answer for anyone familiar with the Old Testament. A quick search of the Old Testament shows 115 uses of that reference, the son of David. Obviously, not all of them are messianic, referring to Jesus, but the point is clearly made that

Jesus was born in the line of King David. He is a direct descendant of David. He is the Son of David. No informed Jew would have any doubt about that.

But Jesus asks those hypocritical, self-righteous Pharisees a second question, one they are not able to answer, according to verse 46. Jesus “tricks” them, as it were, tricking them in the sense of asking them a question that would compel them to expose their own wicked and sinful unbelief. And Jesus refers to a verse in the Old Testament which they likely would not have realized as a reference to Jesus. The verse is,

Ps. 110:1 “The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

So the question is, “Whose son is Jesus?” Who is he? The Pharisees rightly answered, “The Son of David.” But Jesus then asks,

v.43 “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord?’”

Jesus then quotes Psalm 110. And the Pharisees are trapped, trapped by the ignorance of their own unbelief. And silenced by this marvelous revelation of Jesus himself. So what is it that Jesus is teaching us?

There is a such a valuable theological lesson all wrapped up in this very simple declaration of David, a question so definitely explained by the Council of Chalcedon. But the simple answer, the simple expression is this, that Jesus is the son of David. He is a human being. And yet, David also calls Jesus’ “Lord,” a reference to his divine nature. How can that be?

v.45 “If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?”

The unbelieving Pharisees have no answer.

v.46

There is, of course, an answer to that question, and that is the focus of the sermon this afternoon. How can Jesus be both David’s son and David’s Lord? To answer that question as a declaration, I proclaim to you the gospel, that Jesus is fully God and fully human. So we’ll begin with this,

I. Jesus, the Son of David, is fully human.

He is the descendant of David, according to the flesh. And that human lineage is stressed often.

A. The proof of his humanity.

Mat. 1:1 “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king.”

Moving through that genealogy without reading all the names, v.16 “And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.”

Israel wasn’t a big place, and Jesus was known, he was known as for his parents, for his family.

Mat. 13:55 “Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” 57 So they were offended at Him.”

They were troubled, offended, by his wisdom and authority, but they had no question about his human identity, his humanity. Even unbelievers among the Jews would have known of the OT genealogies. There would be no confusion or misunderstanding about that. And many would also know of the great promise to David, first found in,

2 Sam. 7:8 “Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 11 since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house. 12 “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. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. 15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.””

That same promise is made clear in,

Psalms 89:1 “I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. 2 For I have said, “Mercy shall be built up forever;

Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.” 3 “I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: 4 ‘Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.”

That Psalm would continue,

Psalms 89:34 “My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. 35 Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: 36 His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me; 37 It shall be established forever like the moon, Even like the faithful witness in the sky.”

So David would have a son who would sit upon his throne, a man, his seed, his descendant in the flesh. God even sent his angel to Mary to make that announcement,

Luke 1:26 “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” 29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

I could, of course, go on and on with other references, both Old Testament prophecies and New Testament declarations, but let me move on to ask the question, “Why?” Why was his humanity so important? So essential? What was...

B. The purpose of his humanity.

I won't even try to answer that question in my own words, since God himself has answered it. Speaking of Jesus, the writer of Hebrews says this,

Heb. 2:14 "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

We are flesh and blood, we human beings. And our priest, the one who will represent us before God, has to be flesh and blood. We who suffer in this flesh must have a priest who is able to help us, and to help us, he must know our sufferings. Even temptation. "For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

Those words are for your encouragement! And I can't emphasize them enough. Even on a human level, sympathy and compassion are essential elements of healthy relationships with one another. And Jesus provides that relationship, in terms of his shared humanity.

Heb. 4:14 "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find

grace to help in time of need."

But there is an even more significant explanation for the purpose of his humanity, more than just his sympathy and compassion, more than just a shared humanity by which he is able to be "a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God." Those "things" include the sacrifice required as the payment for our sins, and that payment, for the sins of men, had to be paid by a man. The penalty required by God for the sin of man was the death of man. The wages of sin is death. The wages of human sin is human death. As I read just a minute ago,

Heb. 2:17 "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

Propitiation is word that refers to the satisfaction of God's wrath and justice. And only a man can atone for the sins of another man. Only as a man could Jesus die. And so he became a man for just that purpose. The son of David came to earth to lie down his life. What is the purpose of humanity? Why is that humanity so necessary? Because the "Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

So Jesus, the Son of David is fully human. But also, secondly,

II. JESUS, DAVID'S LORD, IS FULLY GOD.

This is where Jesus really silenced the Pharisees, because this is the question they were unwilling to answer, unable to answer because of their unbelief. Saying that Jesus was the son of David wasn't too difficult, even though they didn't fully understand what that meant. But acknowledging that Jesus was human wasn't too offensive, even as we see today. Lots of people are willing to acknowledge that Jesus was a man, but the

rub, the offense of the gospel, is that this man, Jesus, is also fully God. The son of David is also the son of God; and, therefore, David's Lord.

v.43-45

That is the question that will test your faith, whether it is true and real or not. The question is framed, Do you believe that Jesus is God? And that is certainly Jesus' point here, declaring to these unbelieving Pharisees that Jesus is God, fully God.

David says, "The Lord said to my Lord!" So David's son is also David's Lord, the one who would sit at God's right hand, according to that great Psalm, Psalm 110. Clearly that is Jesus, the one who makes his enemies his footstool. Such is,

A. The proof of his deity.

Paul would express that so clearly in Ephesians 1, referring to Jesus, whom God the father...

Eph. 1:20. "...raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

It is Jesus who puts all his enemies under his feet. It is Jesus who reigns on the throne of his father David, as God! And it is Jesus who is declared to be God with such unequivocal words as we read in

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life

was the light of men."

The word was God. And that word, that eternal word, became flesh. Jesus is fully human. And Jesus is fully God. And to emphasize just how crucial that is for the gospel, remember what Peter preached on the day of Pentecost,

Acts 2:29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." ' 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

That's the message upon which the New Testament church was founded. We read that 3000 souls were added to the church that day. A response to this great declaration of the gospel, that Jesus is God! Jesus is Lord, even David's lord!

Now, I've already moved into the question of why, why Jesus had to be God, both man and God. Obviously, we see,

B. The purpose of his deity.

So that as God, he could reign and rule over all his enemies. In the context of David, and the rule of Kings in the nation of

Israel, in the context of Jesus' question to the Pharisees in our text, the purpose of Jesus' deity is to accomplish what no mere man can accomplish. King Jesus had to accomplish what no mere human king could accomplish, and to identify just what that was, in the simplest terms, he had to live! Live and not die. Because mere men all die. Every king died. So for a king to live forever, he had to be God. Same with the priest. Every priest died.

Heb. 7:23 "Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever."

Why did Jesus have to be God? So that he, once and for all, could offer a perfect sacrifice for us, to "save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him." Only God can offer a perfect sacrifice, one of infinite value. Only God can do that! Only God can reign as King forever, the king of kings and the Lord of lords.

That's why Jesus makes this point to the Pharisees.

v.44 "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"

Only God himself has that authority and power as King, and

so this Jesus, this man Jesus, this descendant of David through the parentage of Mary and Joseph, he alone is both man and God. He alone is your savior, "save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him."

Heb. 9:26 "...but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."

So this isn't simply a theological lecture on the two natures of Jesus Christ. This isn't simply an explanation of the Council of Chalcedon on those two natures. This is your life, the hope of life for all eternity in the age to come. And your help in life in this age, help from the one who is both fully God and fully man, the one whom we worship as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Acts 2:34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." ' 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."