

Who do *you* say Jesus is?

Luke 20:41-44 (text)

1 December 2019, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 10:30 a.m.
(Put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Who do *you* say Jesus is?

Do you know what the current Chinese government says about Jesus? I know, first-hand, that the Chinese authorities regard the whole Bible and Jesus as just *fairy tales*!

I wonder how many New Zealanders (just without voicing it) have exactly the same opinion about Jesus!

But *you* – what do *you*, in your heart-of-heart think? After all, is it not so that you & I know the Bible fairly well? So, who do *you* say Jesus is?

You see, our text portrays Jesus in the highest possible light. And here are three points our text allows for us...

- David's Lord
- God's Son
- Consequence

David's Lord

It's three days before our Lord's crucifixion.

The Jewish leadership want Him out of the way.

They have just had three go's at testing Him – with the keen desire that He would say something against God's Law or against the Roman authorities, or that He would say anything by which He would lose the people's favour!

But to no avail! With divine wisdom, Jesus escaped their traps every time!

Now, it's *His* turn to put *them* to the test!

You see, they had asked Him the question re His authority – “Jesus, *tell us by what authority you are doing these things... Who gave you this authority?*”¹

Well, if they were humble enough, they would have inferred from Jesus' reply that He acted by the same authority as John the Baptist – the authority of God!²

So, now He also asks *them* a question re His authority.

¹ [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Lk 20:2). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

² Cf. Lk 20:1-8, *One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. ² “Tell us by what authority you are doing these things,” they said. “Who gave you this authority?”*

³ *He replied, “I will also ask you a question. Tell me: ⁴ John's baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?”*

⁵ *They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn't you believe him?’ ⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.”*

⁷ *So they answered, “We don't know where it was from.”*

⁸ *Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”*

Here's the background to it...

You see, at the time of Jesus, when the Jews were talking about their Messiah, they would often refer to Him as the *Son of David!*³

Indeed, the blind beggar, Bartimaeus, who was sitting just outside the gates of Jericho –he called out, “***Jesus, Son of David (!), have mercy on me!***”⁴

Amazing! Blind as he was, Bartimaeus *believed* that Jesus was the Messiah, the *Son of David!*

And the Pharisees and Scribes? Well, although they refused to believe in *Jesus*, they, too, referred to the Messiah as the “Son of David!”⁵

So, it's a fact! In those days, every Jew talked about the Messiah as the “Son of David!” And, of course, that's correct, for the prophecies pointed to the fact that, when Messiah came, He would be born from David's line!

Well, that being the case, Jesus now asks these learned Jewish leaders (in our text), “How can the people say that Messiah is David's *son*, when David, himself, in Ps 110, calls Him *Lord*?” “After all, this is what David said, ‘The LORD (i.e. Yahweh) said to *my Lord (Adoni)*, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ “Now, if David calls the Messiah ‘*Lord*,’ how could Messiah also be David's *son*?”

My brother & sister, what an excellent question!

I mean, where have you ever seen or heard of a king who called his son by an honorary title like *My Sir*, or *My Most honourable Lord*?

Certainly, *my* Dad would never have done that! You see, although my Dad was not a king, he was a real patriarch! My brother and sisters and I knew pretty well who was the head in our house – it was our father! The “buck” stopped with him! Yes, he was loving & kind, but he wouldn't tolerate nonsense. And all major decisions in the family were made by my father & mother. However, the leader in those decisions was my father! Now, I cannot for the life of me think that my father would ever have addressed me (or even talked about me) as, “My honourable son, Pieter!”

Now, if *that's* the case, how much less are the chances that an ancient Hebrew *king*, living in a *patriarchal* culture, would ever call his son *Lord*?

It's unheard of! – that's to say, unless, of course, there was something exceptionally extraordinary about such a king's son!

So, in our text, Christ asks an excellent and appropriate question: Why did David call his Son *Lord*?

Well, one could say that David remembered God's promises to him – promises by which God had said that He would give David a Son who would sit on his throne; and that God would establish David's house, throne, and kingdom *forever!*⁶ So, David certainly knew that the ideal king would one day be born from his line!

³ Cf. e.g. their so-called Psalms of Solomon 17 & 18, e.g. at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalms_of_Solomon
⁴ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Lk 18:38). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁵ Cf. Mt 22:41-42 ***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”*** (Emphasis mine).

Also cf. Mk 12:35, ***And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?”*** (Emphasis mine).

⁶ Cf. 2 Sam 7:11-16 ***“The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵ But my love***

But, look, even so, would David not still have talked about this son as “*my son, the king*” and not as “*my Lord*”? I mean, if you’re a king and your son after you also becomes king (thus with a rank/title no higher than yours), why would you call him not “My son,” but “My Lord”?

My brother & sister, the matter becomes clearer when we look at what Matthew & Mark say about the incident of our text.

You see, according to these two Gospel writers, here are the words our Lord Jesus was speaking to His adversaries, “*How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord...?*”⁷ “*David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord...’*”⁸

See?

By the Holy Spirit, David knew that his Son, that God-promised Messiah, would be of such high stature that David was moved to readily call Him, “My Lord!”

So, dear Pharisees, dear Scribes, and dear Sadducees, if King David whom you so revere, has, by God’s Holy Spirit, been moved to call Messiah, not just “Son,” but “Lord,” why would *you*, who are far less in stature than David – why would *you* not also call Messiah “Lord?”

See, dear Jewish leaders? David’s Son, Messiah, is of higher rank than His ancestor David; of such high rank as can only be empowered by the authority of the Almighty God! That’s why David called his Messiah-Son, “My Lord!”

Question: What exactly did David mean by the title *Lord*?

Well, that brings us to point 2...

God’s Son

My brother & sister, it is indeed true that this particular Hebrew word for *lord* (the word *’ādōn*) can refer to an ordinary human lord – yes, to any human being of high status. That’s why servants used to call their master, “My lord,” and why people would address a prophet or a prince or a king as “My lord.” It even happened that children would address their dad (and wives would refer to their husbands) as, “My lord” – that’s e.g. how Sarah referred to Abraham!⁹

So, it’s clear: this particular Hebrew word (*’ādōn*, i.e. *lord*) could indeed be used for mere *human* superiors!

But, my brother & sister, it is also true that the context of Ps 110 points to a higher meaning for “my Lord.”

You see, in Ps 110:1 David tells us what he, by the inworking of the Holy Spirit, heard Yahweh said to his (i.e. to David’s) *Lord* (*’ādōn*).

And this is what THE LORD (Yahweh) said to David’s lordly Son...

“*Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.*”¹⁰

will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ *Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”*

⁷ Mt 22:43

⁸ Mk 12:36

⁹ For *’Adōnī* (אָדוֹנָי), *my lord, my master*, it was used to address among other (a) **master** Ex 21:5...; Gn 24:12 +, 44:5...; 1 S 30:13, 15; 2 K 5:3, 20; 22; 6:15; (b) **husband** Gn 18:12...; (c) **prophet** 1 K 18:7, 13; 2 K 2:19; 4:16, 28; 6:5; 8:5; (d) **prince** Gn 42:10..., 23:6, 11, 15..., 43:20; 44:18 +, 47:18...; Ju 4:18; (e) **king** 1 S 22:12...; (f) **father** Gn 31:35... (cf. Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977). *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (p. 11). Oxford: Clarendon Press).

¹⁰ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ps 110:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Wow! What significant words!

After all, my brother & sister, here in Ps 110 these words are not being spoken in a corporate boardroom of a multimillion-dollar company. They're not being spoken by the chairman of the board to his CEO!¹¹ No, here in Ps 110 these words are spoken in *God's heavenly court* – in His throne room! And the One speaking them is THE LORD – yes, Yahweh the great “I am who I am!” And He is summoning David's lordly Son to come take position at His (Yahweh's) right hand!

Wow! What does that mean?

Well, it means that David's lordly Son, whom David was seeing from afar (more than 1,000 years away), would be *co-regent with the Almighty God!*

Yes, David's lordly Son would rule with God from heaven.

See? See the authority by which David's great Son would do His ministry?

See how the NT's message makes absolute sense that Mary's Son, Jesus, had God as His Father?

And so, Yahweh (the LORD) and Messiah (David's Lord) would conquer all God's enemies and make them a footstool for Messiah's feet!

Of course, this “footstool-language” is an illustration which comes from Old-Testament times when a king who had conquered his enemies in battle, would make those enemies' kings come lie in front of him, whereupon the victorious king would then put his foot on their necks – a vivid and painful way of letting them know that they have been subdued! After this, the conquering king might even kill those kings!¹²

Thus, according to Ps 110:1, Messiah would be Lord in the sense that He would be God's Son – therefore, not just David's Son, but also David's divine Lord – the One to conquer God's enemy, the evil one and all his minions!

Messiah would be Lord in a human-transcending sense!

And you know what?

This is totally in sync with the meaning of this Hebrew word, for, you see, although this word was often used to refer to mere *human beings* of high stature, it was also regularly used to refer to God – indeed, even to Yahweh!¹³

My brother & sister, this is the stunning picture which our Lord Jesus was sketching of Himself for the Jewish leaders here in our text – and *that* a mere three days before they would crucify Him!

With these words, our Lord was giving them a final chance to see who He was and by what authority He was operating!

Now, don't forget all the other things which also pointed to Jesus' divine origins! Yes, don't forget everything our Lord Jesus did in the three years and few days running up to the events of our text!

¹¹ Illustration idea borrowed from Bock, D. L. (1994). *Luke* (Lk 20:41). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

¹² Cf. e.g. Josh 10:24-26, ***When they had brought these kings to Joshua, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the army commanders who had come with him, “Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came forward and placed their feet on their necks.***

²⁵ ***Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the Lord will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.”*** ²⁶ ***Then Joshua put the kings to death and exposed their bodies on five poles, and they were left hanging on the poles until evening.***

¹³ Cf. for *Adōn* (אֲדֹנָי), lord, again what Brown, Driver & Briggs are saying: “....ref. to God, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה *the Lord Yahweh* (v. יהוה) Ex 23:17; 34:23 (Cov't codes); אֲדֹנָי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ *Lord of the whole earth* Jos 3:11, 13 (J) ψ 97:5 Zc 4:14; 6:5 Mi 4:13; צְבָאוֹת הָאֱלֹהִים, earlier Is 1:24; 3:1; 10:33; 19:4 (אֲדֹנָי Is 10:16 in common MT; not Massora, doubtless scrib. error); הָאֱלֹהִים Mal 3:1; אֲדֹנָי ψ 114:7” (Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977). *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (p. 11). Oxford: Clarendon Press).

You see, the words which our Lord is speaking here in our text – they come after...

- all the miracles our Lord Jesus had done, like: giving sight to the blind; causing the lame to walk; cleansing lepers; giving hearing to the deaf; raising the dead; and preaching Good News to the poor!¹⁴
- Then, just three days before the events of our text, our Lord Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9 when He, in full Messiah-fashion, came riding on a donkey's foal into Jerusalem! And the crowd was shouting out the prophetic words of Ps 118, "***Hosanna to the Son of David!***" "***Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!***"¹⁵
- Then – can you believe it – the very day before the events of our text, when our Lord Jesus came to the temple and cleansed it, He fulfilled the prophecy of Mal 3:1 in which Yahweh promised, "... ***the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple...***"¹⁶
- Did you hear the word *Lord*? – ***the Lord***¹⁷ (the same title used in Ps 110:1) ***whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple!***

Well, what overwhelming evidence: Jesus of Nazareth *is* who He claimed to be! His *words* proved that! His *actions* proved that! His above-human *wisdom* proved that – which brings us to the last point...

Consequence

My brother & sister, if Jesus really did operate by God's authority – if He really is the Son of God; yes, if He really is highest Lord (and He is), then is it not so that there will be consequences for all who reject Him!?

And here's the sad reality: the Jewish leaders of our text stayed blind! Despite everything said & done, they could not see Jesus' true identity! They rejected Him!

Why?

Because they were riding the comfortable waves of wealth and status. So, they became self-wise know-alls!

And three days later, they killed Him, but not before He plainly told them that He was/is the Son of God (Lk 22:69-70)!¹⁸

What about you?

Who do *you* say Jesus is? Do wealth, status, or pride prevent you from trusting Jesus?

Think well, for there are grave consequences if you reject Him!

¹⁴ Cf. Lk 7:22, ***And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.***

¹⁵ Mt 21:9 ***The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!"***

¹⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mal 3:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

¹⁷ Hā'ādōn (אֲדֹנָי), "The Lord."

¹⁸ Lk 22:67-70, ***"If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, ⁶⁸ and if I asked you, you would not answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." ⁷⁰ They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am"*** (NIV84; emphasis mine).

Do you still doubt?

Let me remind you/me of a few more things:

- Do you remember what happened five days after the events of our text?
- This same Jesus, having been killed by those very Jewish leaders, rose from the dead, proving by that very action that He was indeed David's *Lord* – but not just David's; no, also Lord over those Jewish leaders, and Lord over you & me, and – in fact – Lord over all; Lord who ascended into heaven and did *what?* – and *sat down at the right hand of God Almighty* – and so fulfilled the prophecy of Ps 110:1).
- When will we see Him again?
- Well, when He shall come to judge the living and the dead!

Look, is this not why God's Word says about Him (in Phil 2:10-11), "...*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is... what? - that Jesus Christ is Lord...*"?¹⁹

See why David called Messiah, "My Lord"?

Dear Wainui member, dear visitor, dear young person and child, who do *you* say Jesus is? Who is He for *you*?

I pray that, for you, He is not just your convenient Saviour, but also your *Lord* before whom you arrange your whole life in awe, reverence and gratitude! I pray that the broken bread and poured-out wine which we will now taste will stir your heart & soul as they remind you of His untold love for you seen in His broken body and shed blood!

AMEN (2,255 words excluding footnotes)

¹⁹ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Php 2:10–11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.