



Mark 12:35–37

35 While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, ‘Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? 36 David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

“The Lord said to my Lord:
‘Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.’”

37 David himself calls him “Lord”.
How then can he be his son?’

The large crowd listened to him with
delight.

Reflection

One day every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess with adoration, or through gritted teeth, that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:9–11; Rom 14:10–11). Something like this is happening in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus is taking on all comers. He’s shown up the celebrity teachers and preachers of his day, with far more flocking to hear him than them in the shade of the magnificent colonnades that ring the vast Court of the Gentiles. The crowds of

religious pilgrims who've flooded into Jerusalem for the Passover are in awe of his teaching and presence. A delegation of chief priests, teachers of the law and some of the most respected families in Jerusalem sent by the Jewish ruling council (the Sanhedrin) to confront Jesus, have also come off second best. They tried to undermine Jesus' authority and have ended up by almost losing their own, such was the dressing down they've received from Jesus. Next came the Pharisees teaming up with their arch enemies, the Roman sympathizing Herodians, sent as spies by the Sanhedrin to try and trap Jesus in his words and have him arrested by the Romans. In a heartbeat, Jesus who looks not at outward appearances but directly into our hearts, sees through their duplicity and then astonishes them with unparal-

leled wisdom, turning their own trap upon their heads. Silenced, they retreat into the crowds only to be replaced by the Sadducees and a ludicrous riddle about the heaven they don't believe in. But Jesus, who will come again to judge the living and the dead at the general resurrection of the dead, consigning some to heaven and the majority to eternal conscious punishment in hell, is not one to be mocked when it comes to a matter as grave as the eternal destiny of every human soul. Jesus speaks so well that even his opponents, the teachers of the law, in Luke's account, cannot help but call out 'Well said, teacher!' (Luke 20:39) as he dresses down the Sadducees proving from their own Scriptures the error of their theology.

It's not smart to go one on one with Jesus.

It's not smart to even go ten on one or fifty on one. The best and brightest of Judaism from every faction have come out to try and shut him down but it is they who have lost face and been silenced in the face of his genius and otherworldly authority. One day every knee will bow before his other worldly authority, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess with adoration or through gritted teeth that Jesus Christ is Lord. And during the last few days of Jesus' life, in the heart of the Temple in Jerusalem, the cultural and religious centre of every ethnic Jew and convert to Judaism, we catch a glimpse, a foreshadowing of the great and terrible Day of the Lord and of the glory of Jesus Christ on that day – one man versus all-comers, one man who will reign victorious in the end.

The crowds are enthralled at the display. No one ever spoke or acted like this. And the show continues in today's passage from Mark 12:35–37 where Jesus, the master exegete, delights the great crowds with his mastery of the Scriptures,

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Who is the man standing before them? No-one every spoke or acted like this. The greatest living minds of Judaism cannot hold a candle to him. John the Baptist, the first prophet in four hundred years, gave way to him, saying that Jesus must become greater, and he must become less (John 3:30), not even counting himself worthy of untying the sandals of one such as this. Then the exorcisms, the countless healings, and the miracles; even fresh rumours from Bethany of him raising the dead. Who is this man who stands before us, almost superhuman in wisdom, stature and supernatural power? It is here, that

Jesus goes in our passage today revealing his true identity and the true identity of the Messiah,

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You see in their day it was a common belief that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David, and his reign be a political one, overthrowing the Romans and

retaking David's throne in Jerusalem. We see in the Gospels Jesus not only referred to as the Son of David, but even one occurrence, after the feeding of the five thousand, of the crowds seeking to make Jesus king by force, because of these political expectations surrounding the Messiah. But to take this position is to misread Scripture and belittle the Promised One of the Old Testament. The Messiah's reign will be something far greater and far more eternal than merely taking Caesar's throne in the ancient near east. Jesus could have gone to any number of Scriptures but he chooses to go to Psalm 110.

What is happening in their midst is far greater than an uprising against Caesar. This is a cosmic moment, when the Messiah, David's descendant but even more so his

Lord, is given authority by God to rule and reign over all of creation, through his defeat of Satan, sin and death on the cross. For those that have ears to hear the man standing before them is not a carpenter from Galilee, nor is he simply a political Messiah figure, he is the Lord, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and the Ruler of the Universe. Standing in the Temple and witnessing this display they're catching the barest glimpse of his glory, but this is a crucial moment on which the fate of all of humankind hangs. Psalm 110 speaks of the outcome, on the other side of the cross, a cosmic conversation between God the Father and God the Son come into his glory, ruling and reigning until Judgment Day when every single one of his enemies will be made a footstool for his feet, a euphemism for utter, effortless defeat and their

just punishment in hell. ‘You’ve impossibly impoverished Scripture’s vision of the Messiah. Not a human king like Caesar; an eternal, cosmic, end-times king, the Son of God reigning at his Father’s right hand forever in power – that is who is standing before you. ‘

Think & Pray

We too so often fall into the same trap of limiting Jesus. A great moral teacher and wonderful example of what it is to be truly human, filled with wisdom, who even died so that we might find forgiveness. But as important as these facts are, they’re just the faintest sketch of our Lord and Saviour as revealed to us through his word.

Jesus is the image of the invisible God,

bearing the exact imprint of his nature. Every superlative applied to God is also true of Jesus. From him and through him and to him are all things. Right now, he's holding everything into being, sustaining everything by his powerful word. He's omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. He lives in each and every one of our hearts through his Holy Spirit, and in him we are right now seated in the heavenly realms. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end and the most important reality in between. What Scripture reveals about Jesus should blow your mind. This is who we worship. This is our king.

Is your Jesus too small? Because a right vision of him changes everything. Pray today that God would elevate your vision of Jesus through the power of his Holy Spirit

and through careful and sustained study of his word. Because to see Jesus as he truly is changes everything.