

OpenTheo

Confrontation Continues (Part 1)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this presentation, Steve Gregg discusses the ongoing confrontation between Jesus and religious leaders such as the Pharisees and Sadducees during his time. Jesus uses parables and questions to reveal the hypocrisy of the religious leaders and emphasize the importance of loving God and one's neighbor. Though initially opposed, some Pharisees eventually acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God. Additionally, Jesus challenges the Pharisees' understanding of the Messiah, pointing out that he is not only the son of David but also the son of God. Ceremonial laws and rituals are not necessary for salvation under the New Covenant, and consideration for others is more important than following specific religious symbols.

Transcript

Today's session on the life of Christ, we're going to begin at Matthew chapter 22 and verse 34. This chapter and the previous one are taken up with, very largely, conflicts between Jesus and the religious leaders. And the religious leaders were not some homogenous group.

There were different camps and parties among them as well. And Jesus had to confront each camp, it seems, somewhat separately. Especially the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who were distinctly adversarial toward each other.

They both had objections to Jesus on different bases. And Jesus first takes his swipes at the Pharisees, but they started it. They approached him.

They challenged him about his authority. He pointed out their hypocrisy. They acted as if they really wanted the truth about the matter, but they wouldn't tell the truth about their opinions of John the Baptist.

And had they gotten the right answer to the question about John the Baptist, they would have already had their answer about Jesus. His authority came from the same place as did John. But since they had approached him, and since they had fired the first shot, Jesus turned on them.

And began to give some very pointed parables that pointed at them. There was the parable of the two sons, which implicated the scribes and Pharisees as being actually less obedient, in the final analysis, than the tax collectors and harlots were, who were coming to Christ. Although the Pharisees protested themselves to be obedient to God and subject to his laws, they really didn't obey God.

As much as the scribes and prostitutes were, who were now, of course, turning from those lifestyles and coming to Christ. And then he told another parable, and that was about the vineyard, in which the leaders of Israel were implicated as murderers of the prophets and of Jesus, ultimately. And then in chapter 22, there was a lengthy parable, which sort of focused on the Jews as a whole, not being receptive to God's invitation.

And God's invitation is a command from a king. It's therefore more of an ultimatum than an invitation. You obey, or else you die.

And Jesus pointed out that because the Jews did not receive the invitation, that is, they didn't accept it, they would be destroyed. And the message would be brought to the Gentiles. Even some of the Gentiles, who would show an initial response, would eventually have to be weeded out.

Because the Gentiles, you know, they can be as hypocritical and as wrong-motivated as the Jews can be. And there will be people who, like the Pharisees, have an outward show of interest and attraction to the message, but who do not really modify their lives or their conduct into agreement with obedience to Christ and righteous conduct. So they will be thrown out into outer darkness in the final judgment.

Now, having given these three parables, the parable of the two sons, the parable of the vineyard, and the parable of the wedding feast, Jesus is still locked into a confrontation with these leaders. And first the Pharisees, along with the Herodians, came to him and tried to entangle him with a hard question about paying taxes to Caesar. He beat them out in that situation, and then the Sadducees came and brought one of their favorite conundrums, no doubt one with which they had humiliated and embarrassed the Pharisees with many times before, namely a question about the resurrection, which, without having the insights that Jesus brought to the situation, no one could have answered.

Because the situation seemed to be saying that the very commands of God through Moses, this law of Levite marriage, set up a situation that would make it incongruous for God to allow there to be a resurrection, since according to the laws of Levite marriage, it is conceivable that a woman might have seven successive husbands, and that by necessity because God commanded it. And yet in the resurrection that would set a very strange situation into motion, because she would then find herself, if all of her husbands and she were rejoined in the resurrection, she would be in the position of having seven husbands, and that obviously would be unthinkable. Yes, Jimmy? I don't know what the

Sadducees thought happened when people died.

I think they were fairly secular in their thinking. They didn't believe in spirits, they didn't believe in angels, they didn't believe in the resurrection. It would appear that they didn't believe in a life beyond this one at all.

And there are people like that today. You know, when you ask them, what do you think happens when you die? They answer, well, the machine stops, you know. Your heart stops pumping, you know, the computer shuts off, and there's just nothing there.

The lights go out, and there's nothing else there. Those of us who have never had any trouble believing in the hereafter find that a very unsatisfying prospect, and it does make life seem rather futile, because at most, like Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, the laughter of fools becomes like the crackling of thorns under a pot that are burning, you know. I mean, you can be having a good time, but if death is going to rob you of it anyway, then it was all meaningless.

And if there's nothing eternal, nothing more permanent than this life, then this life doesn't matter anywhere near as much as if there is something beyond it. You know, that's the interesting thing. Some people who are opposed to us talking about heaven and hell and about a life after this, they say, well, you're just making people irresponsible about this life.

You're making it sound like this life is not important, and since these critics don't believe there is heaven or hell, they say you should be telling people to concentrate on this life. Well, we do. Actually, the existence of heaven and hell make this life far more significant, and what we do in this life far more significant than any denial of heaven and hell could ever make it.

If there is no life beyond this life, then this life is meaningless, ultimately. It's just so much opportunity to make a flash in the pan in the whole scene, eternal, you know, scenario. Your life is absolutely insignificant unless there is some eternal ramifications of the things you do.

Anyway, I don't know exactly what the Sadducees believed, and actually scholars don't have an awful lot to go on. I think Josephus is the principal source of information as to what the Sadducees believed. Also, the Gospels themselves mention that the Sadducees did not believe in angels or in the resurrection or in spirits, but whatever else they believed or didn't believe, we are dependent on extra biblical information, and there's not a lot there.

The Sadducean party did not survive as the Pharisees did beyond 70 AD. The Pharisaic party continues to this day in the form of Orthodox Judaism, and Orthodox Jews today are proud to say that they are the spiritual successors of the Pharisees of the first

century. Remember, the word Pharisee isn't a bad word to them.

It is to us, because the word Pharisee is what the Pharisees called themselves. They weren't ashamed of the word. It's only Jesus that stigmatized it as almost synonymous with legalistic hypocrites.

But Orthodox Judaism today is the continuation of Phariseic Judaism. But Sadducean Judaism and Zealot Judaism and Eastern Judaism, those are parties that all perished with the destruction of Jerusalem, and they did not survive that situation. So the Sadducees haven't existed since then, and there just aren't that many first-hand records other than Josephus that could tell us what they believed.

And even his statements about what the Sadducees believed are sometimes not fully understood. Something he said makes many scholars believe that the Sadducees only believed in the first five books of Moses and Scripture. However, I've heard some scholars say that that's not certain that that's what he meant by his statement.

So there's a lot. We can't be certain what the Sadducees thought. But they certainly have their counterpart in modern people who don't believe in spirits or don't believe in the resurrection of the secular materialists.

They just believe that when you die, it's over. Solomon himself went through a phase that he records in Ecclesiastes during his bachelor's years where he thought the same way. Ecclesiastes 9 talks about that.

Okay. Matthew 22, 34, we continue the confrontation. Now Jesus has been questioned with the attempt to trap him by the Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadduceans.

And he has beat them all. He has humiliated them all. And he's caused the multitudes to marvel and to be astonished at his teaching.

But the confrontation is not over. There's a couple of other hard questions to be posed. What we have here is a series of hard questions.

And the last of them he poses to them and he shuts them up after he raises the last hard question that they can't answer. They don't dare ask him any more questions, it says. But he's not done with them then because he begins to lambast the scribes and Pharisees in chapter 23.

We might get to part of that today. Verse 34, but when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, which probably was sort of a bittersweet thing to them, on the one hand, they probably were delighted to see their adversaries, the Sadducees, beaten on this point. You know, the Sadducees could never ask the Pharisees this question again because now the definitive answer had been given to it.

The Sadducees had just been deprived of one of their favorite bits of ammunition against the resurrection doctrine. And that must have pleased the Pharisees to a certain extent. On the other hand, it must have also made them unhappy to see that that only caused Jesus' popularity and his wisdom to shine brighter and it made people marvel the more that he could beat everybody in debate, including them.

Now it says in verse 34, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, testing him and saying, Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

We've had occasion to talk about this teaching of Jesus on many occasions previously. His statement that these two commands really take in all of the things that concern God. Now all of God's interest in our life, all of God's concern for us, all that he wants from us is subsumed under one of these two commands.

Now there are two commands. He was asked, What is the great commandment? And no doubt he was being asked to select one of all the commands in the Old Testament that would be the most important. Now it's probable that the question did not mean, Can you summarize the whole law with a single command? That's close to what Jesus ended up doing.

He summarized the whole law and the prophets in two commands. And it's not likely that they were saying, Can you give us one or two commands that summarize the whole duty of the law? Rather, the question was probably, Which of the individual commands of God stands head and shoulders above the rest to the exclusion of the others? And, you know, I mean, probably the Ten Commandments were in mind by the one asking the question. Although Jesus, in giving an answer, gave two commandments and neither of them are found in the Ten Commandments.

But it's probable that among the rabbis and the Pharisees among them, there were differences of opinion as to which commands carry more weight. For example, the decision had already been made by somebody that the command to keep Sabbath didn't carry as much weight as the command to circumcise on the eighth day. Therefore, the Sabbath command was sacrificed to the need to circumcise a child on the eighth day if the eighth day of his life happened to be on a Sabbath.

And there were other situations where a hierarchy of importance was assigned to various commands. And I don't know this to be true, but one can only speculate reasonably from what is known at the time. The different rabbis probably had their own favorites.

Each rabbi probably had his own commands of God that he thought were the most important ones to emphasize. I say I judge this more by human nature than by anything I know historically to be the case, because that's what Christians do. That's what denominations are all about.

You know, a new group will form, as distinct from all the others, because the founder or the teachers of that group believe that something needs to be emphasized more than has already been emphasized in the existing churches. Perhaps that some new distinctive, some aspect of the teaching of Scripture has not received the proper emphasis, and therefore they start a new denomination to give that emphasis. And many times, of course, since that becomes a distinctive of the denomination, it becomes overemphasized, and sometimes it becomes the major issue of all.

Now, human nature being what it is, I'm sure that the rabbis, with their rivalries among themselves and their different doctrines, probably had their own ideas about what things God had commanded that take precedence over what other things, and probably the question had something to do with that. Expecting Jesus to single out maybe one of the Ten Commandments as being more important than any of the other commandments. Now, what Jesus ended up doing was affirming all the commandments.

He said, I'm not going to pick one command that's above the rest, that's more important than the rest. All the commandments are important, but they can be summarized with a few statements that are found in the law. One of those statements, the one he quotes first, is in Deuteronomy chapter 6, and it begins with the words, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your mind.

And of course, Jesus only quotes part of it here, though I think in Mark's version he quotes the whole passage, including the Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. That's actually Deuteronomy 6.5, and it's repeated in Deuteronomy a couple other times. The other commandment that he said, after this is the first and great commandment, he says the second is like it, you shall love your neighbors as yourself.

That comes from Leviticus chapter 19 and verse 18. Now, this is no new revelation to us. We've talked about the centrality of love for God and the centrality of love for our neighbor all the way through this.

We're nearly at the end of the year, so you've heard it many, many times, so you probably don't need to be told again. But it was no doubt a profound revelation at the time when Jesus gave it. Now, in Mark's gospel, we read an interesting response given by this scribe who asked him the question.

If you look at Mark's version in Mark chapter 12, it's essentially like the passage in Matthew that we read up to about verse 31. Although, after Jesus quotes the two

commandments in verse 31, instead of saying, on these two commands hang all the law and the prophets, he puts it this way. There is no other commandment greater than these.

They are the greatest commandments, but they're the greatest because they include all the others. They're the greatest because all the others are part of them, are extensions of them. They are the central thoughts of old testament ethics and God's concerns for what he wants man to do.

But then we have the response of the scribe, which is not given in Matthew, and it's rather interesting because it says in verse 32, Mark 12, 32. So the scribe said to him, well said, teacher, you have spoken the truth, for there is one God and there is no other but he. Now, the reason he said that is because in verse 29, Jesus quoted the first part of the Deuteronomy passage, hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one.

The Lord is one, and you shall love the Lord your God. So the scribe says, you're right, teacher, you've said it right. This is true, there is only one God and there's no other God but he, and to love him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, you are not far from the kingdom of God. And after that, no one dared ask him a question. Now, Mark tells us at this point that no one dared ask Jesus a question after this.

Matthew tells us the same, but he waits to tell us that at the end, after Jesus asked them a question. But the point here is, this scribe, although we are told in Matthew's version that this scribe was one of the Pharisees who was put forward to test Jesus, it would appear that Jesus' answer convinced him, if he had not already figured this out himself. It seems likely to me that that scribe whom we are told was first put forward as an agent of the Pharisees to test Jesus, and no doubt to find fault with him, he found Jesus' answer to be so good and so true that he could not help himself but to acknowledge and say, you know, that's right, come to think of it.

Loving God and loving your neighbor, that's all that really matters, isn't it? That's worth more than all the sacrifices. That's worth more than all the burnt offerings, isn't it? And that's exactly what Jesus had been teaching throughout his entire ministry, that to love your neighbor is more important than the ceremonial rituals of any religion, including Judaism, which had its ceremonial rituals ordained by God. Even those ceremonies that God had ordained didn't carry as much weight as the ethics that God had ordained, which had to do with loving him, worshipping him, loving your neighbor, doing the just, merciful, faithful thing by your neighbor.

That is far more important than all the sacrifices and offerings, he said. Now, this man

apparently just got the revelation as Jesus spoke, and Jesus said, you're not far from the kingdom. He didn't acknowledge the man to be in the kingdom yet.

This man had only a moment earlier been probably opposing Jesus, it would appear. He was siding with Jesus' enemy, but through Jesus' brilliant response, once again he won over one of his enemies, because the truth of it was so self-evident. We remember a time recorded in John chapter 7, when it says that the chief priests sent out guards to arrest Jesus in the temple.

And then we don't hear about them for a long time as we read some more of the things Jesus said, and then the guards come back empty-handed, and the chief priests of Sinthabat say, why didn't you arrest him? And they said, no one ever spoke like this man. It looks as if Jesus won them over. They went out, trapped him, but became convinced by listening to him that he was right, and they couldn't resist him any further.

That showed a certain amount of integrity on their part, which the scribes and Pharisees in general did not exhibit, and the chief priests certainly did not exhibit, because had there been that level of integrity generally among the Jewish leadership, they would have all acknowledged Jesus Christ, and especially when they saw Lazarus was risen from the dead, they would have said, well, what can we say? He's right. He's from God. He's got powers that no one ever had, and we better acknowledge him to be who he claims to be.

But that was in no sense agreeable to their political agendas, and rather than acknowledge the truth, most of them were willing to suppress the truth in their unrighteousness, as Paul suggests that people do in Romans 1.18. Now, this tells us that there were at least some of the Pharisee camp who were sincere. They might have originally resisted Jesus, but they did so probably sincerely. Maybe they had not had much exposure to him.

They may have only heard negative things about him from their companions and formed a negative judgment. But on this occasion, this one, who apparently approached him as an agent of Jesus' critics, when he finally heard what Jesus had to say for himself, he became convinced, well, how could I criticize that? This teacher has told the truth. He's got it right.

And therefore, the man was close to conversion. He was close to the kingdom of God. Not quite there, but Jesus acknowledged that the man really was on the right track now, and he apparently had not been on the right track when he approached Jesus initially.

Back to Matthew's version in Matthew 22. It's in this version that we read of Jesus saying, On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. And the suggestion is that if you lift up the thing and carry it, you automatically carry along with it anything that's hanging on to it.

And if you uphold these two commandments, you will uphold all the commandments because they're hanging to them. They're attached to them. They are, to put it another way, they are like spokes from these hubs.

They are simply extensions of these thoughts. That if you love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength, you will show, of course, quite naturally, because love is a dominant emotion. Love is a dominant state of heart.

You will find it abominable to your thinking. It will go right against your grain to blaspheme God or to show any irreverence toward God or to have other gods before him or to violate any of those commands that command that God be worshipped. A person who loves God with all their heart is obviously going to worship him.

Love compels them. And likewise, if a person's heart is also full of love for his neighbor, to love his neighbor as much as he loves himself, then he will not be doing things that are unjust or unkind to his neighbor, which means he won't commit adultery, murder, steal, bear false witness, covet what his neighbor has or any other thing that God doesn't want a man to do toward his neighbor. Now, the only laws that are not subsumed under these two commands are, of course, the ceremonial laws.

Now, there is a sense in which under the old covenant, even the ceremonies were a part of loving God, because Jesus said, if you love me, you keep my commandments. And if God said, OK, I want you to offer these sacrifices, I want you to keep Sabbath, I want you to observe these festivals, I want you to abstain from these foods, love for God would compel a person to keep those ceremonies. But the reason those ceremonial things are different in nature from, say, most of the commands in the Ten Commandments is that the ceremonies are such that they're arbitrary.

That is, God was able to choose one ceremony arbitrarily among several options that he could have chosen without compromising his character. For example, if he chose to make the seventh day holy, there's nothing that would have compelled him to choose that day as opposed to the sixth day or the fourth day or the third day. Of course, he had his reasons for choosing the seventh day.

It was the day he rested on creation and so forth. But that didn't make God morally obliged to command rest on the seventh day just because he had rested. It was a symbol.

It was to portray something, to remind the Jews of something. And he could have chosen some other day or no day at all. There is nothing in God's essential goodness that compelled him to command the Jews to observe a certain day.

There is nothing in his essential goodness or his moral character that compelled God to have him tell them to abstain from certain foods or observe certain festivals or whatever

or not touch certain things because those really are not moral issues. And there's nothing good or bad about those things except insofar as God has commanded them. It's always good to obey God and always bad to disobey God.

Therefore, those ceremonial things became moral issues not because they were intrinsically moral questions but because they were commanded under the old covenant to be observed. Now, they're not commanded under the new covenant and therefore we don't have to keep them. The ceremonies, that proves they're arbitrary.

That proves there's nothing intrinsically moral or immoral about them because God wouldn't change morality. What was really intrinsically moral or immoral in the old testament is still intrinsically moral or immoral because God hasn't changed and morality is based on his character and what he does. Whatever he is like is good.

Whatever he's not like is bad. And therefore, if it was immoral at any time in history in the old testament or otherwise for men to commit murder, it is because it violates some basic moral principle that God possesses. God does no injustice and therefore it's wrong for men to commit injustices like murder.

And, you know, God still hates injustice. God is still a just God and therefore murder is still wrong for the same reasons. Because that command as well as many other commands of God are based upon the basic integrity of God's character.

And that never changes, therefore morality never changes. But the fact that certain commands could be discarded in the new covenant whereas they were included in the old covenant shows that they were somewhat arbitrary. They don't embody any basic moral thing.

And that is why loving God and loving your neighbors yourself are things that are unchangeable but they are greater than the sacrifices and offerings because those things are changeable. Those things were not moral in themselves, but ceremonial in themselves. But all things that God really cares about do hang and have hung on these two commandments.

Now, in Jesus' day, even the ceremonial laws were commanded and therefore they were an aspect of loving God. Remember that Jesus told the Pharisees that they were right to have paid the tithe. He said that in Matthew 23, 23.

He told the lepers to go and show themselves to the priests and offer sacrifices commanded by Moses. He went ahead and paid the temple tax even though that was part of the ceremonial requirements of the Jews and not a moral requirement. He did these things because that was what God up to that point had commanded men to do.

But Jesus fulfilled that requirement when he died and brought an end to the need to do any of those things. And therefore none of those non-moral issues matter anymore. Now,

I'm currently interacting with some friends who take a different position than I do on the head covering issue of women.

Of course, you know that's related to 1 Corinthians 11. And there are people who, because of 1 Corinthians 11, feel like all women in all ages and every culture ought to wear a head cover. Now, it's not an easy issue to sort out.

But the reason I come to my conclusions, which are not that way. I don't believe that women need to wear head coverings in every culture and at every time. But the reason I take it that way is because of my general understanding of what Jesus taught about moral issues and non-moral issues.

And it's hard to know exactly what the head covering issue was about even in Corinth. Was it a matter of wearing a symbol of authority? Or, as some translations insert the word symbol. It doesn't appear in the passage in the Greek, but some translations say a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head.

That's in 1 Corinthians 11. But the word symbol is not in the Greek. It just says in the Greek, a woman ought to have authority on her head.

And since that's hard to understand what that means, some translators have tried to help out Paul and add the word symbol of authority. Which means they see the head covering as a symbolic thing. But since the text itself doesn't say anything about a symbol, but may well be talking about... In fact, someone has done a word study and said that the veil that Paul talks about is a shawl that covers the whole head and hair.

Rather than a doily that symbolically says, I'm obeying the head covering law. It would appear that Paul's concerns were more perhaps with the issue of modesty. And that would become a moral issue, of course.

Because to be immodest is to stumble people. For a woman to dress immodestly would stumble people. Now, whether having a head covered or uncovered be a necessary consideration in modesty, I guess maybe that's an issue that can be discussed.

But I think modesty is a continuing issue of concern for Christians because it has to do with your love for your brother. Obviously, a woman is not going to go to church or out in public in clothing that's going to stumble her brother if she loves him. And if she doesn't consider those kinds of things, she either doesn't know what kind of struggles brothers have, or else knowing it, she doesn't care.

She's going to do her own thing anyway and doesn't show any love for her brother. But that becomes a moral issue. But the issue of just wearing a head covering because the Bible says to wear a head covering and therefore some people just wear something that barely covers anything at all, just so they can say they're in obedience to the command, that's ceremonial.

That's embracing a symbolism which I don't really think God cares all that much about. I'm not sure he cares about it at all. There are a couple of sacraments that the Protestant churches have always held to being necessary.

One is water baptism and one is the Lord's Supper, both of which are mainly of value for their symbolism. But apart from that we know of nothing that is generally commanded by Christ or by the apostles that is merely symbolic and necessary. Now many religious rituals are symbolic merely and not evil in themselves and wearing head coverings I would say is one of those.

It's not wrong to wear a head covering even if you just do it for symbolic reasons. But to make that a universal Christian duty I think is to miss the point that true religion to God is not a matter of the symbolic rituals you perform. It doesn't have to do with dressing a certain way which is not a moral issue unless modesty becomes a factor.

These religious symbols and rituals are not that important to God. The question is do you love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? Do you love your neighbor as yourself? If you do that then you will from the heart do the things that please God. Loving your neighbor as yourself may not compel you to wear a head covering.

But it will compel you to live a moral and generous life towards your neighbor. And that's the things that matter to God most I think from what Jesus taught on this subject. Now we have another thing happen here.

In verse 41, while the Pharisees were gathered together, in other words Jesus didn't let them disperse, he turned on them and said, What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? They said to him, the son of David. He said to them, how then does David in spirit call him Lord? Saying, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool. If David then called him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word nor from that day on did anyone dare question him anymore.

They had come questioning him initially to try to trap him but he got out of all their traps and now he put them in traps that they couldn't handle. By asking them about John the Baptist authority and now by asking them about this. I think you're familiar enough with the line of argument Jesus is using but I do need to comment on it in order to not assume that you understand everything about it.

Jesus said, what do you think about the Christ? Now we know that the Christ is a term synonymous with Jesus because Jesus was the Christ. This however does not mean that Jesus is essentially saying, what do you think about me? I have heard actually preachers in paraphrasing this, talking as if Jesus was asking, what's your opinion about me? And he knew well enough what their opinion about him was. He's not asking that, he's not assuming that they are equating him with the Christ.

But they do have an opinion about the Christ. The Christ was a concept, was a predicted entity that the prophets all said was going to come. Of course it was just a Greek word for the Messiah.

And the Messiah was going to be a person who would do something significant for Israel but not all the rabbis had the same opinion as to what he would do. Some thought he would be a supernatural being. Others thought he would be a mere human being who, like David, delivered his people from their enemies.

But all agreed on one thing at least and that is that he would be a son of David. And they couldn't deny this, nor did anyone apparently want to, because back in 2 Samuel chapter 7, Nathan the prophet told David that God would raise up a king of David's own offspring who would sit on David's throne and God would establish his kingdom forever. That's in 2 Samuel chapter 7, that story is found.

And this son of David would reign forever as a king established by God over all of Israel. Well it was obvious that this referred to the Messiah, the same person that is spoken of by all the prophets. And that added a bit of detail to their theology of the Messiah that he would be descended from David.

In fact the term son of David, as we pointed out, was practically a messianic title in Jesus' day. So there's no surprises there that when Jesus asked them, what do you think about the Christ? That is, what is your doctrine on the subject of the Messiah about this? Whose son is the Messiah supposed to be? They said, it's supposed to be David's son. And that didn't show any new innovative insights because that was the standard understanding.

Now Jesus seems to take them to task on that, as if he didn't agree with that doctrine. Now actually Jesus did, but he was trying to show them the missing part of their understanding about the Messiah. He said, well if he's David's son, then why did David call him Lord? Men don't usually speak about their own descendants as their Lord.

For one thing, any living sons that a man has are subject to the father. Therefore any of David's sons whose lifetime overlaps his own, he'd never call them Lord. And furthermore, any of his sons who were not yet born in his lifetime, and the Messiah of course was understood to be a descendant far removed from David, but from David's line, how could the Messiah be David's Lord, if in fact David never even lived to know him? And even if he had, it would seem like anyone who's a descendant of David would look to David as an object of reverence, rather than the opposite.

Now to establish the fact that David called the Messiah Lord, Jesus quoted from Psalm 110, which must have been a recognized messianic prophecy, even by the Jews. Or else his argument would have not been impressive. His argument assumes, first of all, that David wrote Psalm 110.

The psalm title there does say that David wrote it. And while many have said the psalm titles are not part of the inspired scripture, I think for the most part they are to be trusted. They've been around as part of the psalms almost as long as we've had the psalms.

And so, you know, Jesus accepts at face value the psalm title in Psalm 110 that says, A Psalm of David. Furthermore, he takes it for granted that this psalm is talking about the Messiah. And again, if that were not agreed upon by his critics, it would have emptied his argument of any weight.

His argument here is based on these two assumptions. A, David wrote Psalm 110. B, he wrote it about the Messiah.

And where you find the Messiah in that psalm is in the second occurrence of the word Lord. In the Hebrew, where it says, The Lord said to my Lord. The first Lord is Jehovah.

A term that, of course, only ever refers to God. But the second Lord is another Hebrew word in the original, Adonai. And that term is often applied to God.

It means Lord or Master, but it also just means Sir. It can be a term of respect, and it's frequently used in the Old Testament of mere humans as well. However, it is always used as a term of respect.

And to say that the Messiah is the second Lord there, in the psalm, is to suggest that David called the Messiah, quote, My Lord. And therefore, David called the Messiah his Lord. That's the argument there.

Now, even the New King James has capitalized the word Lord in the proper manner to bring this out. Although, of course, Matthew wrote this in Greek, not in Hebrew. So you won't find the name Jehovah in Matthew's gospel, since it's a Hebrew name.

And the word Kyrios would be the Greek word to use. But you see there's all capitals there in the New King James for the first Lord and not for the second. And that is to indicate that the first Lord is a different Hebrew word than the second word Lord is.

It's Jehovah said to my master, my Adonai, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool. Now, Jesus, of course, is quoting this about himself, though he didn't make that the issue at this moment. What he was making as an issue here is that the Jews had not really thought through their theology of the Messiah quite adequately if they were not taking into consideration this dilemma.

Namely, that the Scripture does say, in fact, that the Messiah would be David's son. But David also called him Lord, which hints at something beyond David, something greater than David. He must, to say that the Messiah is David's son must not exhaust all of the important things that can be said about his identity.

Else we'd have no explanation for David calling him his Lord. Now, the explanation, of course, is found in Christian theology. The Jews did not hold the Christian theology, which is why they weren't able to answer Jesus.

But we who are Christians understand that Jesus was not only the son of David, he was also the son of God. And that is why David would look up to him, even though he physically descended from David. He was deity in the flesh, and that made him David's superior by an infinite degree.

Paul brings it out in these terms, in Romans 1, verses 3 and 4. In Romans 1, verses 3 and 4, Paul says, the gospel concerns his son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. Now, here's the dual sonship of Jesus. He's the seed of David, and he's the son of God.

According to the flesh, he's the seed of David. But according to the spirit of holiness, he is declared to be the son of God by his own resurrection. God declared Jesus to be his son.

How is it that the resurrection declared Jesus to be God's son? No doubt Paul had another psalm in mind when he said that the resurrection of Jesus declared Jesus to be God's son. If you look at Psalm 2, Psalm 2 and verse 7, somebody is speaking. It happens to be the Lord.

It happens to be the Messiah, Jesus. He says, I will declare the decree, Jehovah has said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you.

Now, the Messiah speaks and says, Jehovah has called me his son. I am the son of Jehovah by God's own declaration. But what's this got to do with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead? Not much, every way.

It says, you are my son, today I have begotten you. The declaration by God that Jesus is his son is associated with the day that Jesus was begotten. But in what sense begotten? If you'll turn to Acts 13, we'll see how Paul understood this psalm.

And since he wrote the passage in Romans we're commenting on, it helps to see what Paul thought about this psalm. In Acts 13, verse 33, Paul was preaching at the city of Antioch and he said, God has fulfilled this for us, their children, in that he has raised up Jesus, meaning from the dead. As it is also written in the second psalm, you are my son, today I have begotten you.

Now, Paul said that the resurrection of Jesus was a fulfillment of Psalm 27. That's what he quotes, Psalm 27, you are my son, today I have begotten you. How does that psalm talk about the resurrection of Jesus? Well, it can only be understood that way if we understand that begotten here means begotten from the dead.

Paul himself, in Colossians 1.18, refers to Jesus as the first begotten from the dead. Referring to his resurrection, of course. Colossians 1.18, did I say 2.18? Pardon me if I did.

Colossians 1.18, speaking of Jesus, Paul says, And he is the head of the body of the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Jesus' resurrection is compared with being born, or begotten. Jesus himself speaks of himself in that way.

In Revelation 1, and I believe it's verse 5, maybe it's verse 7, it's right around there somewhere. Yeah, verse 5. From Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. So Jesus is the firstborn from the dead.

When God said, you are my son, this day I have begotten you, he means I begotten you from the dead, I resurrected you. The resurrection was the event that Psalm 2.7 was talking about, according to Paul. And God said, you could paraphrase it this way, you are my son, this day I have resurrected you from the dead.

So Paul sees the resurrection of Jesus from the dead as associated with God's declaration that Jesus is his son. And in Romans 1.4 he says that Jesus is declared to be the son of God by the resurrection of the dead. His resurrection showed that he was the person spoken of in Psalm 2.7 who is declared to be God's son.

Thus by raising him from the dead, God declared him to be his son. And that psalm needed to be brought into the Jews' thinking as well as Psalm 110. Both psalms are what we call kingdom psalms.

There's four psalms that are referred to as the great kingdom psalms. Psalm 2 is the first of them, then Psalm 45, then Psalm 72 and Psalm 110. Jesus refers to Psalm 110, Paul refers to Psalm 2, two of the great kingdom psalms.

In both cases they point to the deity of Christ that he is the son of God. Not just the son of David, but he is the son of God as well. And that was the missing piece to the Pharisees' theology about the Messiah.

They had come to think of him mainly in human terms and had left out the part that he would be the son of God. Now, why did Jesus have to make this point with them? Well, one of their greatest objections to Jesus was his claim to be the son of God. And he's basically saying, hey, what do you expect the Messiah to be? You expect the Messiah just to be the son of David? Don't you realize that your own scriptures imply and even state that he would be the son of God as well? In fact, look at 2 Samuel 7. I mentioned this chapter a moment ago because it is the place where God first told David that the Messiah would be one of his offsprings.

But in 2 Samuel 7, we read the actual oracle that Nathan gave to David on this occasion in verse 12 and following. Speaking to David, he says, 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, and he shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.

Now, this statement in verse 14, I will be his father, he shall be my son, is quoted in Hebrews chapter 1 verse 5 as being about Christ. Hebrews 1.5 quotes this verse. The writer says, To which of the angels did God ever say, I will be to him a father, and he will be my son? The writer of Hebrews is implying that this statement is concerning Christ, but it doesn't apply to any angels.

Jesus is higher than the angels, partly because of this declaration. Now, it's interesting too, that with reference to his coming from David, 2 Samuel 7.12 says, I will set up your seed, the Messiah is of the seed of David, but he is the son of God in verse 14.