

The Riddle of Christ

Luke 20:41-44

December 17, 2023

Well, we come now to a what really is a climactic point in our study of the Gospel of Luke, and I'd like to invite you to turn your Bibles to Luke chapter 20, end of the chapter, verse 41. Luke 20:41 to 44 is our text for this morning and this text is really a rare and precious jewel, a unique jewel in the treasure chest of Christology; the doctrine, the biblical doctrine of Christ.

It's in this text that Jesus is drawing attention to the doctrine about himself, in a well-known Psalm of David, Psalm 110. And in doing so, he's revealing the truth of an ancient mystery which is about the true nature of the Christ. You may remember, as we've studied in Luke's Gospel, for a few months now, that earlier in Jesus' ministry, when he was in, in and around Galilee, Jesus took the twelve away from the busyness of

ministry life and he took them away to the region of Caesarea Philippi. Sort of a little retreat.

He went north of Capernaum and Galilee, north of Beseda, and he took them up to Caesarea, Philippi; really a Pagan area, getting out of the borders of Israel. And he took him there to ask them a very important question. He asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am." Remember that. Disciples responded, they cited various popular views; some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, others Jeremiah. One of the ancient prophets represented variant views, different opinions.

Jesus then asked them about their view. But "Who do you say that I am?" Remember, Peter's answer; stepped out just as he always did, speaking for the twelve. But he answered in Matthew 16:16, we remember that, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and we call that the good confession. It's not only the, not only Peter, not only the Apostles, but all of Jesus' disciples, as well, all shared the same view; Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

GRACE CHURCH

Martha is another one of them. Remember the sister of Mary, before she saw Jesus raise her brother Lazarus from the dead in John Chapter 11, Jesus told her, "I'm the resurrection of and the life. He who believes in me will never die, but will live." Do you believe this? Remember She said, "Yes I do." She testified then, sounding very much like Peter in his good confession. She said, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." Another good confession.

Peter, Martha, the twelve, every other true disciple of Jesus Christ, they all see Jesus as that very thing, the Christ. They see him as the Son of God. For the twelve and for many of his disciples, as we've been studying in Luke's gospel, this is the man with whom they had travelled. This is the man they knew as a man, a human being. They ate with him, they drank with him, they slept under the stars with him, as they travelled.

They'd learned so much from him. He'd commissioned them with his gospel of the kingdom. He granted them the power, the ability of authority, to do great miracles of healing and cast

out demons. And yet, seeing him very much as a man, they also saw that he's something else entirely. He doesn't really fit into only a human category. There's something more to this man.

They didn't just share the opinions of the crowd. They had come to a different conclusion about Jesus. A conclusion that it transcended all popular opinion. A conclusion that no human being really could come to on his own. They believed that this Jesus is none other than the Christ of God, the prophesied one, the Son of the living God. And how did they know that?

As we follow up on Peter's good confession, we see that Jesus was very quick to identify what it is that marks the difference between his true disciples and the rest of the crowd. He said, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you." But what? "My Father, who is in heaven." All who belong to Christ, all who belong to God, all of his true people, all of them share the same view. That's what Jesus said when he said, "I tell you, you are Peter. And on this rock", on this truth, on this confession, "I will build my church."

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

I will build this institution called the Church. It is an assembly. It's a congregation of my true people and they share this in common; they make the good confession, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against that assembly, against those people, against that church. So as we come to our text in Luke 20:41, Jesus puts a very similar kind of question here to the scribes and the Pharisees, and to the entire crowd listening in.

On this occasion he asked them kind of a, 'who do you say that I am?' Kind of a question. Let's read the text, Luke 20:41. "But he said to them, 'How can they say that the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, "'the Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'" David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?"

We will navigate through that short text with a little outline. Five points: The occasion, the question, the citation, the implication, and then the conclusion. First point, the occasion. Let's talk a little bit about the occasion, the setting. What prompted this? The challenge that Jesus lays down here. It comes

after a long day of him receiving challenges from the political and religious authorities of the Jews.

We've been studying this throughout Luke 20. It's been a long chapter of challenges and Jesus answering the challenges. The delegation of the Sanhedrin started us off in verses one and following, then verses 19 and following. We've got the scribes, chief priests, and they are in league with the Herodians. And then finally, as we studied over the last couple weeks, the Sadducees came to him in verses 27 and following, challenging him over the doctrine of the resurrection. And each of those challenges, essentially each of them, ultimately, is an attack on his authority.

They're questioning his right to do what he did in the temple, which is to drive out buyers and sellers, basically taking over, saying this is mine, and then starting a temple teaching ministry. So this challenge to the scribes, we might call it, *The Riddle of the Christ*, puts a conundrum before them, which we'll unpack here. David's son or David's Lord? What is he? What is the nature of the Christ? This is his answer to all of their

questions to him, about what right he has to do the things that he does.

This is his answer back to them about his authority, and it's based on his nature. There are several other reasons that Jesus issues this particular challenge, at this particular time, to these people, but we'll come back to those at the end. But as I said, Jesus has issued his challenge. He's pitched them this riddle, this conundrum, put this conundrum before them after a long day of him answering their challenges, answering the challenges of the Jewish authorities.

And Luke has been skillful in abbreviating this account for us. His is the shortest of the three synoptic Gospels accounts. But I think it might help us to unpack the scene just a bit more. In verse 41, Luke tells us that, "Jesus said to them." Them, that's one question. How can they say that Christ is David's son? We need to find out the reference to those two pronouns. Who are the 'them' and who are the 'they'?

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

If we back up to verse 39, we can clarify who the 'them' is. It says then some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well." So that tells us who Jesus is addressing. They are the them. The scribes are the 'them'. All right, so he said to them, the scribes. And we'll unpack that a little bit more.

But the next pronoun they, "How can they say that the Christ is David's son?" 'They' is kind of contained in the verb, but it's, it's right to unpack it in our English translation. "How can they say that Christ is David's son?" It's not clear from the immediate context here who that 'they' is. So when we look at the other two accounts, Matthew and Mark, we can fill in the details here.

We start in Matthew 22:41 and 42. It says this, "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question saying what do you think about the Christ whose son is he? And they said to him the Son of David." So that's the first question that Jesus has asked on this occasion, which Luke has not recorded. He didn't record that part of the conversation.

The question that Luke records is actually the second question that comes up that Jesus asked. But the first question is him asking the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Christ whose son is he? They said to him the Son of David." According to Matthew and Mark, we learned that the reason the Pharisees were gathered together, it's right after the Jesus silenced the Sadducees about the doctrine of the resurrection.

And they gathered together not only to gloat over the way that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, but because one of them, a scribe, posed another challenge to Jesus, asking him which of the commandments of Moses is the greatest of all the commandments. And you may remember, I told you last time, Luke didn't feel the need to record that particular part of the challenge on this day, because he's already covered that ground in Luke chapter 10, talked about the two greatest commandments; "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself," as the two greatest commandments.

But that's why the Pharisees are gathered together. They're backed up by these scribes. We've met the scribes before, but I just want to remind you of their significance, because they're going to come up at the end of the chapter in the very next account. Scribes were used in the ancient world, not because they had good penmanship, they may have, but it was mostly because scribes were trained in letters and documents and publishing.

Very important for any culture passing on its culture to the next generation to have scribes, to have scribal accounts. So these scribes could be hired to write letters, or publish books, or treatises, or serve as royal secretaries, or record keepers, or historical recorders. More commonly, though, and especially for the Jews, scribes receive training and education, scholarly education, transcribing written law codes and then interpreting them. And for the Jews in particular, this meant training in the oral and written tradition of Scripture.

So we think back to the, kind of the prototype of the scribes, Ezra the scribe. We heard about Ezra the, the, Ezraite, Ethan

the Ezraite, who was a scribe after the pattern of Ezra. But he's the archetypical Jewish scribe, Ezra. When this whole group of scribes, kind of looked back to him as their pattern, Ezra, remember, in Ezra 7:10, "He set his heart to," to, "study the law of God, and then do it, and then teach its commandments and ordinances and statutes to Israel." That's Ezra.

Good scribes did that. They really did follow the heart of Ezra, in that pattern. Other scribes just became law experts. The scribes were, especially in Jesus' day, they were experts in the Law of Moses; known to be experts in interpreting the law. They, they, were known to be experts in applying the law. They were legal counsel, giving legal advice. They taught the law. They were legal scholars and teachers. In fact, in some places, like Luke 5:17, they're called teachers of the law, *nomodidaskalos*. So nomos, law and then, *didaskaloi*, teachers synonym for a scribe.

Scribes became the theologians. They were the teachers in the synagogues. They became rabbis and they became, in a practical sense, lawyers. So back here in Luke 20:41, Jesus said to them,

and he's addressing the Pharisees in particular, as we said, but we recognize the scribes are right there, present. In fact, in the previous account that Luke doesn't record that section where the scribe asks him about the greatest commandment, the scribes are there.

They're all surrounded by the crowds in the temple, listening in, leaning in, wondering about this controversy. And that is when Jesus asked them, "How can they say that Christ is David's son?" Mark 12:25 makes it even plainer. Jesus taught in the temple and said how can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? So he's directing the question to the Pharisees. The scribes are standing right there. They back up the Pharisees. They are the theological backing, the legal scholarship behind the Pharisee movement.

Really, he's speaking to the Pharisees, directing the question to them. But it's about the scribal teaching. It's about the rabbinic teaching. So he's inviting the scribes to answer. He's inviting them to give their scholarly perspective; and he lays down, what's really an exegetical challenge. It's a challenge

not only about their interpretation, but to see how they do at discerning the implications of this popular notion, widely held, that the Christ is the Son of David. Do you understand what that means? And do you understand the implications of that? Let's see. That's the occasion for the question he asked.

Which brings us to a second point: The question, itself. Number two, the question. Again, speaking to the Pharisees, some of the scribes, are of the Pharisees, are present. They're surrounded by the crowd in the temple, all of them leaning in, all of them listening in, trying to hear what, how, how the controversy and back and forth is going. And, so, Jesus asked him: What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? And these Pharisees said to him, the Son of David.

Again, we said that's the first question. The second one recorded in Mark, "How can the scribes then say that the Christ is the Son of David?" And here it is again simplified in Luke 20:41. How can they say that is the scribes? How can they say that the Christ is David's son? We might read that and assume

Jesus is questioning the Davidic sonship of Christ, here, publicly.

That's not really what's going on. Actually, there's an adverb there in the Greek which gives the actual sense of this. It's kind of like, how is it that the scribes say the Christ is David's son? Or in what sense is it that the Christ is David's son? So it's not about the fact of David's sonship or the Davidic sonship of the Christ. It's about the nature of it. You see the difference? That's what Jesus is posing here.

The view that Christ is David's son. There was nothing controversial about that at all. That was an established fact. That is the predominant and popular view. And Luke has been very, very clear for us as readers, Gentile readers. Theophilus to whom he addressed, Luke being a Gentile, he's been very clear about Jesus being the son of David from the very beginning. Luke helped his readers come to the right conclusion about Jesus being the son of David.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

God sent the Angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee called Nazareth. It says in Luke 1:27, "to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph." Oh, by the way, he's of the house of David and Gabriel came to tell this Virgin Mary about the child, who is miraculously conceived in her womb. Says in Luke 1:32, "He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the House of Jacob Forever. And of his Kingdom there will be no end."

Every Jew would recognize, just as Mary, young Mary recognized, that is a clear, unmistakable reference to the Davidic Covenant recorded in Second Samuel 7:12-16. There God had told David, said "David, when your days are fulfilled, when you lie down with your fathers." That is when you die. "I will raise up your offspring after you." And make no mistake, he's one "who shall come from your body and I will establish his kingdom."

So, David, your Kingdom isn't going to end. It's going to continue. It's going to outlive you. "He shall build a house for my name, I will establish the throne of his Kingdom forever."

"Your house, your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever." Lots of forever's there. Many in Israel recognize that covenant promised to David. Mary recognized that covenant language in Gabriel's words. He was telling her, Listen, God's covenant with David, Mary, it's coming to fruition. It's coming to fruition through the child who's been conceived by the Holy Spirit in your womb.

Narrative continues, Luke 24. We come to that section where Joseph, because of the, the, census record and, and, having to register each Jew in his own hometown. Luke also records how Joseph went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth and he left Nazareth where he had his carpentry shop and his business and he went down to Judea to the city of David. which is called Bethlehem.

Why is that? Well, because he was of the house and lineage of David. He had to go there to be registered with his betrothed wife Mary, who was with child. when Luke published the official genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3:31. It reads, Yeah, you guessed it,

"he is the son of David." So he, David, is in the lineage of Christ. Jesus looks back to David as his father in his line.

Remember the wise men visiting Herod the Great, inquiring about the king of the Jews? They had seen his star in the east, and they'd come to worship him. And Herod troubled and all Jerusalem with him, because Herod is murderous and jealous and suspicious. But he summoned all the chief priests, he summoned the scribes of the people, and he inquired of them all where this Christ was to be born.

And remember what? Remember why they quoted from Micah 5:2? "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." It wasn't just the educated class, the chief priests and the scribes. They're not the only ones who knew the birth place of the Messiah. They're not the only ones who knew the family lineage of the Messiah.

All the common people too. They knew that the Christ is the Son of David. Remember in Galilee, two blind men called out Matthew

9:27, "Have mercy on a son of David." They're appealing to him as the king, the son of David, the Christ. In Capernaum, Jesus cast a demon out of a mute and blind man in Matthew 12:23. All the crowds were amazed and watching this great miracle. And they said, "Can this be the Son of David?" They get it; this the Christ is going to be son of David.

News about the Son of David spread beyond the borders of Israel. There was a Canaanite woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon, you may remember in Matthew 15; it's recorded she sought out Jesus' help for her daughter. She said, "Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." On a roadside outside Jericho, we studied this as well. Two blind men, Luke 18, two blind men invoke the mercy of Jesus again crying out, "Son of David, son of David." So in Galilee, in Tyre and Sidon to the West and north; in Jericho to the east, Jerusalem too. All of them knew the Christ would be son of David.

Remember the coronation procession? As Jesus rode astride the colt of a donkey, even the children were crying out, shouting

out from the temple complex. Hosanna to who? The son of David. So all people, far and wide, young and old, men and women, rich and poor, educated and common, all people knew the Davidic lineage of the Messiah. It was a matter of settled fact in the land.

What was not so clear among the common people was the true nature of the Messiah. What this meant. Even the role of the Messiah wasn't altogether clear to them. The common view, I mean it's not that it's entirely wrong, it's just an insufficient, incomplete view. But the popular notion about the Messiah's role is that he come as a military conqueror, that he'd come to overthrow the nations, overthrow whoever was oppressing Israel at the time.

In this case, it's the Romans. And then he would establish his kingdom and rule the world from Jerusalem, as a political ruler. He'd have military power, strength, might; no one would mess with him; no one would mess with Israel. And he serves as a political, administrative leader, ruler over the world from his throne in Jerusalem. Texts like Isaiah 9:6 justified that

viewpoint: "For us a child is born unto us a son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

They interpreted that as political military ruler. We think of Prince of Peace as the peace that he accomplished in the Cross. Why? Because we backfilled our understanding of that with all that the Scripture teaches about his redemption, about his substitutionary work on the cross. They looked at Prince of Peace as you establish peace through the sword. They're not completely wrong about that. He will do that in the future.

In fact, as the context expands, it further justifies their expectation that this son of David would be a military political leader. His dominion will be vast and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it, with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. And the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this.

So they're not wrong about him being a military and political leader, except in this, that they limited his role. They limited the Messiah's role, restricted him to a, a, martial political role, and seeing nothing beyond that. They did not discern the spiritual work that Christ came to accomplish. They didn't see the redemptive role. They didn't.

They didn't put it together with the need for reconciliation with God, because of a need, the need for a new heart, the need for forgiveness of sins, a kingdom of those who are rightly related to God, because their sin is taken away and they're righteous before God. They didn't see the spiritual work that was required, the atoning work that he would accomplish, as we see in places like Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, other places as well.

So Jesus intends to needle them a bit. And again, it's not the crowd per se, that he is pressing here. It's not even the Pharisees in particular. He's going after the scribes. He's going to the theologians, the exegetes in the crowd, and he's going to give them a riddle, a riddle about the true nature of the Christ. This conundrum in light of the promise that God made

to David. He is going to pose the riddle to the scribes, the scholars, the exegetes, because of all people they ought to know, right?

Surely, they've thought this through. Surely in all of their study, they landed on this text and they've unpacked and mined its riches. They've seen it's Messianic glory. They've seen who the Christ is; his nature, of course, right? Brings us to a third point, number three: The citation.

The citation, verses 42 to 43. Jesus cites the text, Psalm 110 verse one, as the scriptural basis and the divine authority for the challenge he lays down to them. How can they say that the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." May come as somewhat of a surprise, that up to this point in redemptive history, the answer to the riddle of the Christ and his true nature, that answer has been lying on the surface of one of the most familiar Psalms of Israel for all these centuries.

It's sitting right there. But apparently, as we see in this conclusion of the text, apparently no one, not even the scribes, not even these scholars and exegetes, not even these experts in the law. No one had discovered this most precious jewel. But there it is, lying on the surface of the text, in the very first verse, the answer to the puzzle, answer to the riddle about the true nature of the Christ.

Two important points about the citation, here, we need to recognize. First, Jesus cites David as the author of Psalm 110 in both Mark and Matthew's account. He ties that to the Holy Spirit. David by the Spirit says this or the Spirit through David says this. But here Luke makes it very, he isolates David, because this is a Davidic Psalm.

Lots of ink has been spilled, and I read a lot of it this week, and it was not very pleasant to see how many people denied Davidic authorship of Psalm 110. It's the arrogance of modern scholarship and we won't go into all that. I'm not going to bore you. You're welcome. Secondly. Secondly, so first, Jesus cites David is the author of Psalm 110, which is important. And then

secondly, Jesus cites this as a Messianic Psalm, that is to say, it's a prophetic Psalm about the Messiah. Both of these are essential.

Both these points are essential for setting up this riddle for the scribes to solve. This Messianic Psalm of David; Psalm, authored by David about the Messiah, it's unlike any other of David's messianic Psalms. Kyle and Delitzsch, the Old Testament commentators, they write this, "The other messianic psalms of David are reflections of his radical," that is not to say far out. No, it's radical meaning deep, meaning profound.

So they're reflections. "Other messianic Psalms of David are reflections of his radical ideal, contemplation of himself, reflecting images of his own typical history." And in David's history, in his life, in what God did, in and through David, we see types of Christ. That's what they're saying we see. We see pictures that point us as signs ahead to Jesus Christ.

Those are the other Messianic psalms. Psalm 22 is a case in point and go back and read that for yourself. But in this

messianic Psalm, David is not reflecting on himself. This is not a subjective related Psalm. It is objective. David is standing in this Psalm, Psalm 110, as an observer, not a participant. He's not the subject. He is the, he is objectively standing outside and, and, looking from the outside and observing the Messiah. He stands apart from the Messiah in the Psalm. He distinguishes himself from the Messiah. He writes about the Messiah. It's very different than the others. They give you a little more to chew on about this Psalm: Psalm 110.

David is writing this Psalm, probably later in his life, and he's reflecting back on the time of his conquest of Jerusalem. You may remember he took the city away from the Jebusites; the Jebusites who taunted him from the walls of their city, saying he can never get in there. But he took the city and that allowed him to set up his, the city of David: Zion, the city of David. It allowed him to do what he'd always longed to do, to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem, bring the Tabernacle near, so that he could go to the Tabernacle, inquire of the Lord, give thanks, offer sacrifice and worship his God.

GRACE CHURCH

The significance of God there, tabernacling in Jerusalem, beside David, is that David is there ruling, as at God's right hand, as a Coregent, so to speak. Victory over the Jebusites is only the beginning. God continued to give David victories all throughout his, all throughout the region, all throughout his lifetime, making the enemies of the Davidic king a footstool beneath his feet.

It was later, after his victory over the Ammonites. After David, through his commander, military commander Joab, they sacked the chief city of the Ammonites, Raba. And after that victory, David is looking down over the city of Jerusalem and he remembers, with profound sadness and great remorse, some of the terrible sins that he had committed during that two-year campaign against the Ammonites.

Remember the sin with Bathsheba, the murder of her husband Uriah? All that happened during that campaign. David's sin led to great turmoil, unceasing sorrow within his own family. Remember the rise of Absalom, who drove his own father David out of the city? He had to leave the Ark of God behind. I mean,

David probably could have set his crown aside and been fine, but to leave the Ark of God, for him that was ripping his heart out.

David, as he's there reflecting on this time in his life, looking back, he's thinking about the limitations of his own coregency, ruling at the right hand of God. He's seeing his own sin and weakness, his limitations, his frailty, his failures. And he knows he will not be the perpetual king. So, as he looks prophetically, far to the future, God reveals to him, by the Spirit, the words that he pens in Psalm 110, "The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."

One commentator put it this way, reflecting on, "as David's reflecting on his sin, which it casts a shadow of sorrow over the whole of his future life, reducing its typical or typological glory to ashes. But out of the ashes, the phoenix of messianic prophecy, here arises, the type coming back to the consciousness of himself. Here lays down his crown at the feet of the antitype." End Quote.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

The type is David: Weak, sinful, failing. He's going to pass off the scene and he knows it. The blessed antitype is the Christ. He's the one who will sit at God's right hand. He is the one who will be there, conquering his enemies until all the promises are fulfilled, until God has subdued all his enemies beneath his feet.

In Hebrew, it's Yahweh declares to my Adonai. Yahweh, the divine name declares to my Adonai, my Lord, my master. And what's he declare? Sit at my right hand. Right hand is a place of honor, place of authority. If he told him to stand at his right hand, Yahweh would be offering him protection. Stand here. No, but he says, "Sit at my right hand." He's not offering just mere protection, he's declaring Coregency, a joint rule: God with his Messiah at his right hand.

This is a perpetual Coregency, continuing, never failing. It's never compromised by fallen human weakness, never compromised by sin, by failure. This Christ remains sitting at the right hand of Yahweh, until all is accomplished, until he makes his enemies his footstool. As we fill this in from First Corinthians 15, we

realize that the last enemy to be conquered is what? Death, right? And that death will continue until all enemies are vanquished.

Custom alluded to, here, about the footstool beneath the feet, it's depicted in ancient frescoes. You can see conquered enemies who are basically bowed down and acting as human footstools for the feet of conquering kings at their throne and that's the picture here. In the next verse, Psalm 110 verse two, it says, "The Lord, Yahweh, sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter." So that is, he deploys him. He sends him out to conquer.

Yahweh extends Messiah's kingdom, saying rule over your surrounding enemies and then he promises your people will volunteer on the day of your battle. We're seeing in the Russian Ukraine war right now. Nobody's volunteering in Russia. They're being conscripted. They're being grabbed. They're being, they're taken out of prisons and say, hey, you want your freedom, go fight in Ukraine. And some of those wise ones are saying I'll stay here. Not for Messiah. Those fighting for him, they'll volunteer.

Yahweh promises his Christ total victory in Psalm 110, verse 5. The Lord is at your right hand. He will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. Execute judgement among the nations, filling them with corpses. He'll shatter chiefs over the wide earth.

Strikingly similar, isn't it, to Psalm 2 verses 8 and 9. "Ask of me and I'll make the nations your heritage, the ends of the earth, your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a Potter's vessel."

More we could say, but going to come back to the riddle here. Jesus frames the problem in this riddle in a rhetorical question in verse 44. That's our fourth point number four: The implication. This is the implication. This is what he's driving at. The implication of Psalm 110, verse one, and the implication of Psalm 110, verse one, it's an apparent contradiction. David thus calls him Lord. So how is he his son?

Again, same use of that adverb shows up here again. In what sense is David's son also David's Lord? No father, no grandfather, no patriarch would refer to his son, grandson, or

any of his progeny as Lord or master. So Jesus says. What gives? Solve the riddle. Explain this, scribes. Couple options here. Really only two. You'd say number one: Perhaps the Messiah is not the son of David after all. And then that would mean that there's a boatload of scripture that needs to be reexamined: Second Samuel 7; Second Samuel 23; Psalm 89, which we read earlier; Isaiah 9; Isaiah 11; Jeremiah 23; Jeremiah 30; Jeremiah 33; Ezekiel 34; Daniel 9:25; Micah 5:2.

All of those texts are going to require some updating, and in order to update those texts and reinterpret them, you got to use some pretty creative exegesis, like gymnastic twisting exegesis, to avoid the clear teaching of all those texts about the Davidic sonship of the Messiah. So, you scribes may say in Psalm 110, that the Messiah is not the son of David after all, but then you're left with bigger problems.

The other option is that you must accept David's clear prophecy about the Messiah. This is no mere military political ruler. He is no mere political deliverer. He's something else entirely. If they acknowledge the clear and obvious implications from the

clear meaning, from the correct interpretation of Psalm 110, here's what they have to acknowledge about this figure. The Messiah, the Christ, whoever he is, whoever he turns out to be, this is what they have to say from Psalm 110, that he is the Lord. Why?

Because David acknowledges him as my Lord. That's the king saying, my Lord. There's someone above him. This one is raised up by Yahweh to the right hand of Yahweh, to the place of honor, a favor of regal authority. You have to say from Psalm 110 that he is Coregent. He acts with divine permission, with divine authority, with divine prerogative. He's commissioned by Yahweh. But you can also see in Psalm 110 that he's in submission to Yahweh. You see two separate persons, one who's of Coregent and one who is the Regent. He's in submission to Yahweh as one who executes his will.

You have to say from Psalm 110, clearly, he is the conqueror of the entire world. He extends his rule from Zion, to shatter kings and judge the nations. He obviously possesses an inordinately long life, making him superhuman at least, but more

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

accurately, he is divine. This is an eternal person. And lest we forget, by the way, he's also David's son, meaning he is a human being. If son means anything, if fatherhood means anything, and parentage means anything, he is a human being, which means he has a human nature. All of those things are implications coming out of Psalm 110.

Now, no doubt the scribes didn't see this, all this, at this time. You and I standing there, we wouldn't realize all this either. I mean, it would take some very careful reflection, but the implications of Psalm 110 lead to this inescapable truth, which we've noted from the very beginning of today's sermon, that this Christ, God's Messiah, is both Son of Man and Son of God. He possesses two natures, not one, but two; one a human nature, the other a divine nature. Remarkable.

It's only those who believe. As we said from the very beginning, only those who believe; Jesus' Apostles, the twelve minus Judas Iscariot, Jesus' disciples, they and they alone by the Holy Spirit are able to identify Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. They and they alone know, by the Holy

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Spirit, that this Jesus is the most unique person possessing two natures, a human nature and divine nature. They know that, and that's why this truth, Jesus is the Christ of God, is the dividing line between believers and the rest of humanity.

And now we see the implication of David's Psalm. So let's consider what this means in a final point. Point number five: The conclusion. You're looking at the time. You're saying, well, you're already to the conclusion, and I say yes, but it's my longest point. Now, the conclusion number five: The conclusion. I don't have a Bible verse to match up to this point in the text because we've run out of verses. Jesus has left us hanging here, right?

He doesn't answer the riddle. He gives him the riddle, but he doesn't solve it for him. He leaves the riddle unanswered. He leaves the conundrum messing with their minds. The dilemma is unsolved. So the scribes, so the Pharisees, so the entire crowd can ponder this truth. If they're to humble themselves, if they're provoked by the spirit of God to take up the challenge and then go back for themselves and look at Psalm 110 in light

of what Jesus just said, they'd go back and examine the text in its context. They'd come to see that there's a whole lot more there than they ever knew. No doubt they'd scratch their heads.

They'd be unable to figure out the full import of this on their own. The nature of the Christ would remain an unsolvable riddle for them. Until what? Until the resurrection? Until the proclamation of the resurrection. The mystery hidden in this riddle is going to open up wide after the resurrection.

So by the Spirit's regeneration, by his illuminating ministry to all believers, all who believe will come to a true knowledge, to a right interpretation and see that this Jesus is the Christ, that he has not one nature but two. He is Son of man, son of God; son of man with a human nature, son of God with a divine nature. Those two natures being son of man, Son of God, allowing him to stand as the mediator between God and man.

There's one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus. This is him and this is why. You know what else they discover if they read Psalm 110; let's say like verse 4, "The LORD has sworn

and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" Messiah is David's son coming from what tribe? Judah. Where do the priests come from? Levi. For any Davidic king to crossover, as Saul tried to do, and offer sacrifices, brings a curse upon him.

This is a priest. How is he a priest? Oh, he's not a priest after the, the, tribe of Levi. He's a priest of a different order. You're a priest forever, the Lord swears, not changing his mind. "You're a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Melchizedek, discover him in Genesis 14 and other places, as well. Hebrews has a lot to say about Melchizedek. I'll mention some of it. This is why Jesus, as a priest, has such a keen interest in the temple.

Here is where all the questions of all his inquisitors are answered. Here's where all the challenges that they posed about his authority to do what he did in the temple are answered and silenced. He's a priest, a special kind of priest, of a special order, and he has every right, in fact the only right, to do what he'd done in the Temple.

By discovering his true nature, the Jewish leaders would come to understand his authority as Messiah, both king and priest, answering any lingering questions that they might have in their mind about his right to do as he does; act as he acts; say what he says. Now I told you earlier about one of Jesus intentions, imposing the challenge, giving the riddle, it's to answer those challenges that are raised about his own authority. The complaints about him doing what he did in the temple on that day. Silencing all complaints and all challenges about his right to do what he did in the temple.

But there are several other reasons that Jesus gave the riddle and pointed. Let me point these out from the text. So first of all, as we said, Jesus is putting an end to the question of his authority once for all as the necessary implication of his messiahship, and we've seen that already. I'm not going to rehearse that.

But secondly, here's another reason that Jesus poses this Riddle. He is, he's helping the common people by exposing the

scribes to them, by showing their scribes to be insufficient; incompetent as exegetes. They're supposed to be the theological brains behind the two major political religious parties in Israel. The Pharisees and the Sadducees employed scribes to back them up theologically, to go and do their research. They're their research assistants and their research backstop.

Scribes are very important, but Jesus here exposes them as incompetent exegetes, as bad theologians. They are blind guides and that's why he goes into, at the end of the chapter, you can see this rebuke of them and warning the people. It says in verse 45, Luke chapter 20, in, in, the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, who love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues, and the places of honor at the feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. Oh they will receive a greater condemnation."

On the one hand he's exposing the scribes as kind of nothing to worry about, just a gaggle of pompous puffed-up dandies, loving to walk around in flowing robes, and being greeted and fawned

over, tripped over, kowtow to. On the other hand, he says, though, these scribes are quite dangerous, like a pack of hungry, rapacious, widow devouring wolves. They'll eat your grandma, is what he's saying. So watch out.

And this exposure of these scribes, for who they really are, for their incompetency, that they can't handle the text; means don't listen to them. And can I just throw this in there as a little application for you. [When you do not see people who can't handle the.] When you see people who can't handle the text well, don't listen to him anymore. Don't follow blind guides.

Don't listen to people who sound cool, sound good, but they've really, they're just, really, a bunch of hot air. Man, get down into the meat of the scripture. Get down into the, chew on the chunks of meat you find in the scripture, and, and, and God has given, by Christ, he's given to the church, pastors, teachers, evangelists, who are, they are competent and skilled and gifted by God to teach you the truth. Don't think that just anybody can do it; especially set apart. So listen to them, but stay away from people who cannot handle the text.

Third reason that Jesus poses this challenge is he's setting the stage, post crucifixion, post resurrection for sinners who take part in putting him to death. On the one hand, this challenge that he gives his riddle, poses a warning to the scribes and the Pharisees, the chief priests and the Sadducees, who fall on the side of the enemies in Psalm 110 verse one. The enemies who are to become destined to be his footstool.

When put under oath by the high priest Caiaphas, the one who presided at his trial before the Sanhedrin in Matthew 26:63, "The high priest said to Jesus, by the living God, I place you under oath. If you are the Messiah, the Son of God, tell us. 'You've said it,' Jesus told him." Then I tell you, let me go further. "In the future you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand" of the "of the power." Psalm 110:1.

"You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." And for what purpose does he come on the 'clouds of heaven?' Psalm 110, verse two, "That he should rule over all his enemies." That he should

conquer, that he should slay them. This is a warning for the scribes, a warning for those who make themselves the enemy of the Christ.

And I can think of no better way to fall into that category of enemy than by putting him to death on a cross. On the other hand, he's setting the stage, post crucifixion, post resurrection, so that it serves as an issue of a call to repentance. There will be sinners lead astray by the scribes, the Pharisees, the chief priests, the Sadducees. They'll be lead astray.

The crowd who shouted praises of "Hosanna, Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." They're the same ones, a week later who call for His blood. "Crucify him, Crucify him." What in the world? How did they shift so quickly from one position to another? That shows that they were not deeply rooted into the word of God. The things that they voiced were not coming from deep convictions in their heart. And, when the, when the winds shifted, so did their words. Beloved, I see this all the time.

I see it all the time as a pastor, and it breaks my heart, how easy it is for some, some who are in leadership, some who get in prominent places, to just flip from one position to another. Why do they do that, especially among the young, restless, and Reformed? Why do they go so astray? It's because they're too young, not Reformed enough, and always restless.

They just continue wandering around looking for the new fad, the things that they continue to hear on podcasts, the things that they listen to on the conference platforms. They don't own that as a deep conviction within their own hearts. They're just following the personality. When the personalities, when the, when the celebrity loses his shine, passes off the scene, and another one steps in, take his place, well, they latch onto that one.

Beloved, please study to show yourself approved. Please get into the word. Go deep into the word. There are sinners who will call for Jesus' blood and his crucifixion here. And after the deed is done, I mean, start hearing the preaching of the resurrection

from Peter and the apostles. You know what they're going to do? They're going to regret, with great regret over taking part in the evil deed.

There are 3000 on the day of Pentecost, who mourned taking part in the evil deed. "They looked upon," who, "Him whom they had pierced." They mourn over their sin, and they trust in Jesus as the Christ and to them, good news, forgiveness is available. That's Peter's message when he preached the gospel at Pentecost, and he used Psalm 110:1 in his call to repentance. You can turn there if you'd like to Acts chapter 2, just a few pages to your right.

You know, you got to skip the book of John and then get into Acts chapter 2. And verse 29, I'm going to read a chunk here, but in Acts 2:29, this is Peter's sermon and Pentecost. "He says, brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day."

Verse 30, "Being therefore a prophet, knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon the throne, David foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up and of that we are all witnesses.

"Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"

Oh, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Oh, "When they heard this they were cut to the heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every single one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

"For the promise is for you and for all your children, for all who are far off, everyone for whom the Lord our God calls to himself. And with many other words he bore witness and continue to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.'" The crooked generation; they are the enemies under the footstool of the feet of Christ, the Messiah. Verse 41, "So those who received his word were baptized, and they were added that day," to the Church, "about three thousand souls."

There's a fourth reason that Jesus poses this riddle, going back to Luke chapter 20. A fourth reason that Jesus gives the riddle, as Peter's sermon indicates, this post resurrection, post ascension, Preachers of the Gospel, authors of the New Testament, we see that believers make very great use of Psalm 110, verse one.

It's by a long margin, that Psalm 110 verse one is the most quoted portion of the Old Testament. 24 direct quotations and many more allusions besides, to Psalm 110 verse one. Peter quotes Psalm 110 verse one in his preaching, as does Stephen when he stands before the Sanhedrin, testifies to the Sanhedrin

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

just before his, in fact, it's what he says, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."

That's what gets him killed. Sadducees didn't like that.

Paul quotes Psalm 110, verse one, in Romans 8:34, First Corinthians 15:25, Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 3:1. The writer of the Hebrews draws heavily from Psalm 110, showing the superiority of the New Covenant, the high priestly ministry of Christ. So believers make good use of understanding Psalm 110.

The fifth reason Jesus gives this riddle, on this occasion, he's drawing any who are there that day, who might be enabled by the Holy Spirit to see his Messiahship, to see the true nature of the Christ, and to draw the connection to him and his ministry, even as he's facing the scribes and the Pharisees unbelieving, hard hearted members of an evil, perverse generation. Jesus is yet, still evangelizing them. He is still loving them to the very end.

Peter and the Apostles, after the resurrection, after the ascension, they keep on trying to help the people. They keep

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

going with Jesus' intention to evangelize and to love, try to help all people, Jew and Gentile alike, to see that this Jesus is the Christ. They keep going back to that question that he had asked them. "Who do people say that I am?"

They keep on pitching the same question to the people. Who do you say Jesus is? Oh, some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others, Jeremiah, one of the prophets. Okay, yes, Jesus is prophet. The Christ is to be the prophet. True enough. Moses described him that way in Deuteronomy 18:15 and Deuteronomy 18:18. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me, from among you, from your brothers. It is to him you shall listen. I'll put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."

Oh, he's a prophet, all right. He is the prophet of God. He is prophet with a capital PROPHET. Prophet, the final prophet. But the office of prophet is not all that defines the Christ. Psalm 110 verse four, as it makes plain, Christ is also a priest. He is the priest, the priest to end all priests. He's an eternal

priest. As the writer to the Hebrews shows. He's one who serves after the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7 says, "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God." "He is first, by just translating his name, king of righteousness." That's what Melchizedek means, king of righteousness. But "he is also king of Salem, that is king of peace." Salom. Shalom, peace. "He's without father or mother or genealogy. He has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but he resembles the Son of God, he continues as a priest forever."

As I said, the Christ, he's not from the tribe of Levi. He's from the tribe of Judah. And yet he's to become the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the different order, not Aaron, not Levi, but the order of Melchizedek. And from that order, from that priesthood, Jesus is entered into the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. He's gone behind the curtain, and he's entered there on our behalf, as a forerunner.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

How did he get there into the Holy of Holies? By dying on the cross, and the veil was ripped in two, showing God is with man and man has been reconciled to God through Christ. That's where he serves forever. Hebrews 7:16, "by the power of an indestructible life, as our great High Priest." David couldn't see it from his vantage point. Though he couldn't see it, I can imagine him penning Psalm 110 and reflecting on God's goodness and kindness to him in spite of his many failures, in spite of his terrible sins, in spite of all of his weakness and, and, all of his limitations.

I can imagine him taking great joy in penning Psalm 110 verse 4, "Priestly work of Christ." Oh, how we need a priest, beloved. Oh, how we need someone to confess to, someone to pour our hearts out to, someone to come to who can sympathize with our weaknesses, because he knows what it is to be a man. And yet one who is not simply limited as a man, but has a different nature as well, a divine nature, who could truly bring us to God.

Oh how we need a priest. Jesus the Christ, he is the prophet God predicted through Moses. He's the priest God promised

through David. Lastly, the Christ is also the king of Israel, third office prophet, priest, and king. He's the son whom God promised to David in the Davidic covenant. Psalm 110 demonstrates that along with many other texts, he is the king of the world.

One day that will be realized in the Millennial Kingdom, here on earth, as Jesus rules and fulfills all these covenant promises to rule over his enemies, to demolish every opposition, ruling them with a rod of iron. As Jesus shows us, since David has called his own son, Lord. While being the Son of David, this Christ, this King, he is both Son of Man with a truly human nature, he's also son of God with a truly divine nature.

How does that riddle get answered? How? How do we figure that one out? Well, that comes to us in the proclamation of the incarnation of Christ; the Son of God, taking on human flesh, two natures one person. We know that, as in Christology, as the hypostatic union, two natures, one person.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Clearly, precisely, articulated in the Caledonian definition. Caledonian Creed of 451, listen to this language. Not going to go through the whole thing, but listen to this, "We confess we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ at once complete in Godhood and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting of a reasonable soul and body of one substance, with the Father as regards the Godhead, and at the same time, of one substance with us, as regards His manhood.

"He's recognized in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation The characteristics of each nature being preserved, and coming together to form one person and subsistence, even as the prophets from the earliest times spoke of Him, and as our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us." Where did he teach us? Right here.

"And the Creed of the Fathers has handed down to us one person, two natures, Christ, this Christ, Prophet, Priest, and King. He is the one with the right and the only right. He is the one with the authority and all authority, in heaven and on earth and

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

under the earth, and he commands everything according to the will of his Father in heaven.”

Does he command your conscience too? Whatever he said anywhere on the earth, in Galilee, Tyre, and Sidon, Caesarea Philippi, Judea, Jerusalem, Jericho. Wherever he was, whatever he said in the middle of the temple, listen, that's how it goes. He speaks and it is law. He is all three branches of our government; legislative, judicial, executive, wrapped up into one. What's better than American democracy? That!

Well, I mean what is, what is, the problem between our, in our, in our three branches of government? They keep dividing from one another, don't they? You got the one, you know, wrestling against the other and we're, spl, we're, dividing up those powers, because they're always in tension, because the heart of man is wicked. He takes his power and his authority in his own direction and so the two branches are checks against the other.

What's better? All three branches, judicial, legislative, executive, in perfect union and perfect harmony, wrapped up

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

together in one person. One person who has the interest of God in mind, is Son of God, and the interest of mankind in mind, as Son of man; one person, two natures. Since the resurrection, all authority in heaven on earth is given to him. Since the Ascension, he's now at God's right hand, sitting there until God makes his enemies his footstool. And when he comes again, at his second coming, he will execute the justice of God.

And so, I ask again, Jesus is prophet, but is he your prophet? Is he the one who's teaching you all truth? Do you run everything you think, and everything you hear, and everything you learn by Him? You check with him your, your, teacher, your prophet. He is priest. But is he your priest? Is he your one and only great High Priest, receiving your confession, forgiving your sin, cleansing you from all defilement and uncleanness and impurity?

Is he the one who shows his wounded hands and feet, the wound in his side, to the father for you, showing that his atonement accomplished your salvation? Is he your great High priest? Does he continue to make intercession for you personally, before his

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

God? He is king, yes. But is he your king? Is he the one who commands your allegiance, who commands your obedience, of all your days and nights, of your public life and your private life as well? Does he rule over your heart? Does he have your full and undivided allegiance, or do you make him share your heart with others or other loves?

I hope that he is your Prophet, Priest, and King, and if not for any of you, I'm going to ask him right now to make it so for you. Let's pray. Our Father and our God, our Lord Jesus Christ, Savior, Redeemer of us, the one who's captured and won our hearts. You who rule over the hearts of your people. You who will rule over all, believer and unbeliever. You will rule over them all.

And those who do not believe, you will rule with a rod of iron. But for your people ruling in our hearts, we know that you are truly our Prophet, our Priest, our King. We recognize you as being that one person, the Christ, possessing two natures, a human and a divine. We thank you that you are our mediator before God. We thank you that you have reconciled us to God the

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Father, by the wounds, by your death on the cross. Thank you that you died, the death that we deserved, and that you have given us, by the Spirit, the life, the eternal life, and all the rewards that you have merited.

Thank you for your full and perfect obedience before the Father, that he declared his approval of you when he raised you from the dead, when he caused you to ascend his right hand, when he placed you there. Thank you that you're there interceding for us, directing the Church and directing the affairs of the world, ruling from on high.

We long for the day when you will return to be glorified, gazed at by all your believing people, glorified, and to be marveled at. We long for the day when all your promises, all the promises that God made to you, our Lord Jesus, will be fulfilled in this time, on this place of earth, that all those who've rejected you will have to. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, of the glory of the Father.

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

And we thank you for the time in this season too. Give praise and thanks to you, Father, for sending this blessed one, Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God. We ask that you would impress these truths to our hearts today, that we would walk out of here with hearts full of worship, gazing upon the majesty of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.