

“Hail! Hosanna, David's Son!” Trinity 18 Matthew 22:41-46

“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” With these two questions, Jesus turns the tables on the Pharisees once again. They, along with the Sadducees and Herodians had put Jesus to the test several times in a row. They asked Him theoretical, philosophical, theological questions. Questions argued by respected rabbis for ages. Questions they were convinced only had two answers—and no matter which way Jesus answered, they, no doubt, planned to oppose him, and accuse him of blasphemy before the plethora of Passover pilgrims gathered around.

The problem is, Jesus has this funny way of always finding an alternative answer. A holier, more God-pleasing answer. An answer they never could have imagined. And so, with every question posed to Him, Jesus foiled their plans. And now, it's Jesus' turn to ask the question—two questions, really.

One: “What do you think about the Christ?” And two: “Whose son is he?” And how they answer the second question—the question Jesus seems to be driving at most—how they answer the second question will in turn answer the first question, what they think about the Christ.

So, they quickly answer, without even thinking: “The son of David.” Easy! Now, it's not necessarily that they were wrong, but it is inadequate, incomplete. You see, their answer betrays the fact that they

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believe the Christ would only be an earthly ruler. What they believe about the Christ was entirely based on what their finite minds could comprehend. When they say “Son of David” they only have in mind a human lineage.

They were aware of God’s promise to King David in 2 Samuel 7—the promise to one day “raise up [David’s] offspring...and [to] establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” They were aware of the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai and Zechariah all pointing to David’s righteous branch who would come and inaugurate a new Israel, establishing an endless dynasty with descendant after descendant after descendant ascending to the throne. They were even aware of the Psalms of Solomon a set of 18 songs attributed to the former wise king, including the 17th Psalm of Solomon, which includes a prayer to God for the coming of the son of David. “Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, At the time in the which Thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel Thy servant, And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, And that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample (her) down to destruction.” It goes on to point to the Son of David, the Christ, casting out sinners, destroying, judging them and leading the righteous. So, when the Pharisees are asked, “Whose son is the Christ?” they, without hesitation, point to David.

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Again, it's not that this was the wrong answer...it's not a bad answer...just not the best answer. Son of David—that's only half of it. Because if you stop there, all you get is an earthly king, waging earthly wars, sitting on an earthly throne. In their mind, they pictured him coming to bring Israel to its glory days, and Rome to its knees. Jesus rejects this idea, though, because there's more to it than that, even though He could have taken on this challenge.

The very first chapter of Matthew highlights Jesus' lineage, going all the way back to Abraham. “Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah...” and so on. Then we get to “Jesse was the father of David, the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah...” etc, etc. And then we get to, “...the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.” So, there you go! Jesus could've just stopped there and claimed His right as heir of David's throne. But that wasn't enough.

The problem is that, in those days, they understood their ancestors to be greater than themselves. They believed that, as time went on, with each passing generation, that the prestige and greatness of each generation diminishes. You can be good, but you can never be as excellent as your father, or grandfather, or great-grandfather, and so

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on. But we know Jesus is far, far, far greater! So, Jesus asks a follow up question. “Ok...if the Christ is David’s son...then what about that time David wrote—in a passage we know to be Scripture, mind you—what about when he wrote: ‘The Lord says to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet?’” Now, this passage always confused me as a kid. It’s hard to understand when you use the same word twice in one sentence. But the key to understanding it is as if David, "in the Spirit," overheard a conversation between two persons. The first person, “The Lord,” or Yahweh, God the Father, says to the second person, “my Lord,” or my master, come sit at my right hand. Now, in any kingdom in those days, the king answered to no one. The king was in charge. The king had no master. Period. So who could David’s master be?

Jesus is pointing out something even David understood: the Christ is far greater than David. Jesus is pointing out that the Christ has a place on the throne beside God Himself—equal to Him in majesty and power. “If, then, David calls him Lord [or Master], how is he his son?” If, as they thought, generations got worse in time, how could David call his descendant Lord? Jesus’ words blew their minds, because, this changes everything! Because, if that’s the way of things, then the Christ is the tree topper. Jesus belongs at the very top!

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It wasn't wrong to think the Messiah would be a descendant of David—He was and is. But there's more to the story! If God was going to save His people—just as they were crying out in their shouts of “Hosanna to the Son of David”—if they really wanted Him to save them, it would take something greater than another David. It would take more than an earthly king, fighting earthly wars, sitting on an earthly throne—because these things fail us all the time. “Put not your trust in princes!” No, if God was going to save His people, it would take more than a man. It would take the Son of God coming into this world to wage spiritual warfare!

Jesus, the Christ, Son of God, and Son of David, came to rule amid His enemies. He came to trample underfoot the enemies which attack us: sin, death, and the devil. His kingdom would be made righteous only because He is righteous and cleanses His people. His reign would be perfect, because He would be perfectly selfless, where David was, occasionally, selfish. He would give up His own life, where David was responsible for the deaths of others. He would be a good shepherd, and David would simply be another sheep in His fold.

Whose son is the Christ? Son of David, yes...but even greater—He is the Son of God. And His kingdom, His throne is established forever. We don't put our trust in earthly kings and authorities. We put our trust

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in God alone. We put our faith in Christ, our King—the King whose coming will be glorious, and awesome, and mind-blowing. Hail!

Hosanna, David’s Son. Hail! Hosanna, God’s own Son! Come soon, Lord Jesus.