

Recognizing the True King and Rejecting False Religion (Psalm 110:1-9 & Mark 12:35-40)

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Psalm 110:1-9

Of David. A psalm.

1 The Lord says to my lord:

“Sit at my right hand

 until I make your enemies
 a footstool for your feet.”

2 The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying,
 “Rule in the midst of your enemies!”

3 Your troops will be willing

 on your day of battle.

Arrayed in holy splendour,

 your young men will come to you
 like dew from the morning’s womb.

4 The Lord has sworn

 and will not change his mind:

“You are a priest forever,

 in the order of Melchizedek.”

5 The Lord is at your right hand;

 he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

6 He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead
 and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

7 He will drink from a brook along the way,

 and so he will lift his head high.

Mark 12:35-40

Whose Son Is the Messiah?

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

“The Lord said to my Lord:

 “Sit at my right hand

until I put your enemies

 under your feet.”

³⁷ David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?”
The large crowd listened to him with delight.

Warning Against the Teachers of the Law

³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

There’s a **sermon outline** for you to take **notes**.

Please have your Bibles open at **Mark chapter 12** starting at verse 35.
Let me **pray** first.

Let’s pray...

Introduction

We are continuing our series in Mark’s Gospel, picking up where we left off last year—in the middle of Mark chapter 12.

So far in this chapter, Jesus has faced a series of challenging questions:

- From the Pharisees and Herodians - a question about paying taxes to Caesar (Mark 12:13–17).
- From the Sadducees – a question about the resurrection (Mark 12:18–27).
- And from a teacher of the law – a question about the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28–34).

Each time, Jesus answers with wisdom and authority. He silences His opponents—not just because He is super clever, but because He is God.

Now, in verse 35, the roles reverse. As Jesus is teaching in the temple courts, **He asks a question of His own.**

Jesus’ question will help people – **recognize that He is the true King**

Recognizing the True King (Mark 12:35-37)

What Does “Messiah” Mean?

Before we look at Jesus’ question, we need to understand the word **Messiah**.

[Slide-Messiah]

Depending on your Bible translation, verse 35 uses either *Messiah* or *Christ*.

- *Messiah* comes from the Hebrew *Mashiach*.
- *Christ* comes from the Greek *Christos*.

Both words mean “**God’s Anointed One**.” They are interchangeable.

Importantly, *Messiah* or *Christ* is not a **name but a title**. Strictly speaking, we should say *Jesus the Christ*—Jesus the Anointed One.

In the Old Testament, kings were anointed with oil when they were appointed to rule. So when the Bible speaks of the Messiah, it means **God’s anointed King—the one God promised to send to rescue His people**.

Jesus’ Question

In verse 35 Jesus asks:

[Slide-V35]

“Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?”

Jesus is not denying that the Messiah is David’s son. Instead, He is inviting people **to think more deeply**. The Messiah *is* David’s descendant—but He is also **much more than that**.

To explain this, Jesus points to our Old Testament reading from Psalm 110, a psalm written by King David – and a psalm that everyone agreed referred to the Messiah.

David Calls the Messiah “Lord”

In Psalm 110:1, David writes:

“The Lord said to my Lord...”

David was Israel’s greatest king. Yet he refers to the Messiah as “***my Lord.***”

[Slide-v36]

In verse 36, Jesus explains that David, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said:

“The Lord (Yahweh, God the Father) said to my Lord (the Messiah): ‘Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’”

Then Jesus asks the key question in verse 37:

“If David himself calls him (the Messiah) ‘Lord,’ how can he (the Messiah) be his son?”

A king would never refer to his own son as “Lord.”

Jesus’ point is clear and powerful: **the Messiah is not only David’s son—He is also David’s Lord.**

And if the Messiah sits at God’s right hand - and Scripture consistently teaches that the one who sits at God’s right hand is Jesus (see Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22).

[Slide-conclusion]

The **conclusion is unavoidable: Jesus is the Messiah.**

The Title “Son of David”

[Slide-Son of David]

We also need to clarify the phrase “**Son of David**”

“**Son of David**” was one of the most common titles for the Messiah.

The Old Testament promised that God’s anointed Messiah King would come from **David’s family line** (Isaiah 9:2–7; 11:1–9; Jeremiah 23:5; Ezekiel 34:23; Psalm 89:20).

Jesus was frequently addressed by this title – “**Son of David**” (Mark 10:47), and both Matthew and Luke’s genealogies/family trees show that **Jesus truly is a descendant from David**.

So the Messiah is the Son of David.

But Jesus shows that **this title on its own is inadequate**.

Over time, “**Son of David**” had become **tied to the idea of a political or military Messiah—someone who would overthrow Roman rule and restore national independence**.

Jesus is saying: *Yes, the Messiah is David’s son—but He is far more than a political saviour.*

He is **Lord**.

And in the Old Testament, **LORD** is the name used for Yahweh Himself. **That title points unmistakably to God**.

The Heart of Jesus’ Teaching

In summary, Jesus is saying:

[Slide-Teaching]

- Yes, I am the Messiah.
- Yes, I am the Son of David.
- And, Yes, I am also David's Lord.

And as David's son, Jesus is truly human.

But as David's Lord, Jesus is truly divine.

[Slide-Jesus is divine]

It matters a great deal that Jesus is the Divine/God. Because - only someone who is fully God can keep God's law perfectly and be the perfect sacrifice for sin. And only someone who is truly human can stand in our place.

Jesus came not to establish an earthly political kingdom, but to **bring people back to God.**

Jesus redefines the Messiah as God's servant—one who shows God's love through His death on the cross, to deal with sin, to offer forgiveness, and restore humankind's broken relationship with God.

Through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, people are invited into a kingdom that is *not of this world* (John 18:36)—but a **heavenly and eternal kingdom.**

The Question for Us?

The passage leaves us with a **personal question:**

[Slide-Question]

Is Jesus our Lord?

If He is our Lord, then He is our master—and we are His servants.

Jesus Himself says in Luke 6:46:

“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

To call Jesus Lord is not just to a matter of using the right title. It is also a matter of building our lives on His words and obeying them—like building a house on solid rock.

So the call of from this passage is clear: **Jesus is our Lord.**

Will we recognize Him as King David did—and live under His loving rule?

Will we trust and obey Jesus – and follow His example in how to live a life that pleases God?

With this amazing teaching - no wonder the crowd in Mark 12:37 listened to Jesus with delight.

(pause)

Now in verses 38 to 40 – **Jesus teaches us how to reject false religion**

Rejecting False Religion (Mark 12:38-40)

Warning against the Teachers of the Law

Because - the teachers of the Law have not taught the people they way they should have...

Jesus then goes on in verses 38 to 40 to **warn the people about the teachers of the law**

[Slide-Charges]

Jesus makes a series of charges against the teachers of the law:

1. They **walked around with flowing robes**. Wearing such long robes – they could not hurry or do work in them. Therefore these flowing robes became a

symbolic of a leisurely man of honour. In Matthew 23:5 Jesus says this about them - *Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long...* - today we'd call them **show ponies!**

2. They **loved being greeted in the market places** – things like ‘here comes Rabbi Paul!’. It would be equivalent to me loving it when people call me “Father” or “Reverend” or insisting people call me “Reverend” or correcting people if they don’t.
3. They got the **front seats in the synagogues** – so they were facing the people – and so no one could miss them and no one could miss how important they were!
4. They had **places of honour at banquets**. These places of honour at banquets were allocated – the most important person sat to the right of the host, then the next important person to the left, then the next to right, then next to the left. So everyone knew who were the MOST important people at the banquet!
5. **Ripping off widows** – Teachers of law were supposed to have a trade to support themselves but had convinced people that they were so important and honoured – they should be supported – and they sucked in women especially vulnerable widows to support them
6. Lastly **their prayers were notoriously lengthy and showy**. Culturally people saw these lengthy prayers were not so much offered to God but designed to impress the people so that they looked holy and pious

If we apply these warnings to ourselves...

Jesus is basically warning us about 3 things:

Jesus Warns Us

[Slide-Warnings]

1st warning.- Jesus warns against our desire to be important or prominent.

Illustration: The name on the plaque

Imagine walking into the church hall at morning tea and seeing a shiny plaque on the wall which reads:

“This hall was built through the generosity of...John, Mary, Fred, Freda...”

— and then a long list of names in very large letters.

Now imagine that one name is missing — your name!

Suddenly, the joy of giving feels a little less joyful.

Nothing has changed about the hall.

Nothing has changed about the gift.

But something has changed inside us.

We’re now cheesed off!

We’ve been left out!

We’re not important!

That moment reveals a quiet truth inside us:

we don’t just want to **serve** — we want to be **seen**.

Jesus doesn’t condemn good works.

But He warns us about doing good works for applause or accolades.

The desire to matter is human.

The danger is - when being **noticed** matters more than being **faithful**.

2nd Warning - Jesus warns against **ego!**

Ego – comes from Greek and means “Me, myself or I”

So Ego means the most important person is – me, myself and I!

Illustration: The invisible microphone

Imagine there's an invisible microphone hanging from the church ceiling.

But this microphone doesn't pick up our voices —it picks up our **thoughts**.

Suddenly, after the service, everyone can hear things like:

- “I like it when the sermon is shorter”
- “I prefer the King James Version of the Bible”
- “I would have preached that passage differently”
- “I prefer old hymns – and the old words”
- “I didn't hear them pray about the ministry I'm involved in”
- “If I were running the service, it would be much smoother.”
- “No one thanked me for my help”

Outwardly, we look humble.

Inwardly, the microphone is loud and clear – **church is about ME and not about God!**

Church ego is sometimes outspoken

It says, “*I know better.*”

“*This isn't how I would do it.*”

“*My preferences are more important.*”

And sometimes Church ego is subtle.

It often sounds reasonable.

It presents itself as wisdom, experience, or concern —

but underneath, it quietly centres around *me* instead of God.

Jesus exposes ego and redefines greatness in Mark 9:35:

“Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

Church must never be about us — our preferences, our pride, or our recognition

— but about God and others. James 4:6 says— **God opposes the proud and**

shows favour to the humble.

At Bible Study this week — we joked about having a box at the front door to put our ego in, as we enter — or maybe a car-parking spot — to park our ego!

3rd warning - Jesus warns against - using our position/role in church – for self-gain –

Illustration: The keys to the building

A person is given keys to the church building—it's a sign of trust.

At first, the keys are used to serve: opening doors, welcoming people, helping ministries run well.

But over time, the keys start to mean something else: the keys come to mean: power, control, influence, leverage.

Suddenly the person with the keys is saying things like:

“If they want this ministry to happen, they'll need to go through me.”

or “I’ve been here longer — I should decide who uses the church hall”
 or “Without me, this place wouldn’t function.”

The keys were given to **serve the church**,
 but they’re now being used to **secure a sense of power**.

Jesus warns the teachers of the law because they loved titles, seats of honour, and public recognition — and used their position for themselves.

Authority in the church is never given for personal gain. It’s given for the good of others — and to glorify God — not ourselves!

Conclusion

To finish up then

The moment our role at church becomes about our importance, we’ve stopped following the servant King.

[Slide-Matthew 23:12]

JESUS is our Lord and King and Master and we are His humble servants!

As Matt 23:12 says:

Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Let’s pray...

Heavenly Father, we thank you that Jesus is Lord, exalted at your right hand. Forgive us when we seek honour for ourselves or neglect those in need. Give us humble hearts that serve you faithfully, love the vulnerable, and honour your Word in all we do. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Table Talk (Mark 12:35-40)

Q1. What do the titles The Messiah and The Christ mean?

Q2. What's wrong idea about the Messiah was there in Jesus' time?

Q3. What is Jesus' point about referring to King David's psalm 110?

Q4. What things in your life might have to change to acknowledge Jesus as Lord of your life?

Q5. What was wrong with the teachers of the law?

Q6. What's wrong with a) Status and privilege in church b) Ego in church and c) self interest in church? What "H" word should we have?

Benediction (Micah 6:8)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God. Amen.