

Who is Jesus

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[0 : 00] And let's turn to God's word in Mark chapter 12. And we read from verse 28.

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them, that's Jesus, and the religious leaders, the Sadducees, debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked them, of all the commandments, which is the most important?

The most important one, answered Jesus, is this. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

The second is this. Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these. Well said, teacher, the man replied. You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him.

To love him with all your heart and with all your understanding and with all your strength. And to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.

[1 : 08] When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, you are not far from the kingdom of God. And from then on, no one dared ask him any more questions.

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, how is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? 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.

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

And may God bless that reading of his word to us. If you could turn now, please, in your Bibles to Mark chapter 12. And we'll pray as we turn there.

Heavenly Father, we thank you once more for the Bible. We thank you for the passage that's before us. And we pray for your help as we turn to it. And as we think about the meaning of it.

[2 : 19] As we listen to the words of Jesus. As we note the responses of the different people to Jesus. We pray that you would be speaking to us. We pray that the same Holy Spirit who inspired the psalm.

And who inspired the words of Mark's gospel. Would be at work in this place. Moving within our hearts. And moving in and amongst us.

In such a way that our minds would be directed towards Jesus. But not only our minds directed. But our hearts touched. So do a work, we pray, for your glory.

For our salvation. In each heart this morning. And what we pray for ourselves here. We pray for those who would desire to be with us. But who are not able to be.

We're conscious of some who are sick in their homes. We think of others who are in care homes. Some who are committed to the type of work that would cause them to be occupied today.

- [3 : 23] And we ask, Lord, that for all those whose minds will be with us. But who are not physically able to be here. That you would be ministering to them. Blessing them where they are.
- And for the churches around us in different denominations. Lord, whatever the gospel message is proclaimed. We do pray that you would take the words of that gospel. And bring them with power.
- The power of God into the hearts of people. So move amongst us, we pray. We pray for all who surround us in this place. In this community in particular. We are aware that there are many more sitting in their homes this morning.
- That are sitting in churches. And we ask, Lord, that you would do for them what we cannot do for them. That you would awaken their souls. And that you would draw people to yourself.
- For we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. John Wesley is a name that would be familiar to most of us.
- [4 : 26] If you go through the hymn book. And flick through some of the familiar hymns of a few centuries ago. John Wesley is a name that keeps on popping up.
- And we know the Wesley brothers. We know a little bit about the Wesley brothers, likely. But John Wesley was a man who was born in 1703. He went to college in Oxford.
- He was a fine scholar. He was ordained into ministry. He studied divinity. And together with his brother Charles Wesley.
- Who wrote to him that we sang, first of all. Hark the Herald Angels Sing. Together with his brother Charles Wesley. And George Whitefield. John Wesley formed part of a society that was known in Oxford as the Holy Club.
- And it says in the article that I was reading. I'm just quoting this section. Members of the Holy Club took vows to lead holy lives.
- [5 : 27] Take communion once a week. Pray daily. And visit prisons regularly. In addition, they spent three hours every afternoon. Studying the Bible. And other devotional material.
- So these were serious men. About the things of God. In 1735. That would make John Wesley 32.
- He was sent as a missionary to Native Americans. In Georgia. And it was a disaster. From start to finish.
- The short period that he was there. Was a complete disaster. Why was that? Well. It became clear to Wesley. It became clear to the people he was ministering to.
- And it was clear to those that he returned to. Eventually. That the reason it was a disaster. Was because he wasn't born again. He'd been through all this training.
- [6 : 26] He'd known so much. Biblically. He had all the markings of one. Who was a Christian.
- But he wasn't born again. 1738. He returned to London. And on the morning of the 24th of May.
1738. He opened the Bible. This passage that we're in this morning. And before the day was done. John Wesley had gone from being a man.
- Who was not far from the kingdom of God. To a man who knew that he had an assured place. In the kingdom of God.
- On that day. He was brought to life. He was converted. Now John Wesley.
- [7 : 26] Before he was converted. We could say. Had much in common with the man. That we find. In conversation with. With Jesus. In Mark 12.

This teacher of the law. Who comes to Jesus. With this genuine question. He's a man who had a clear interest in Jesus. As Wesley did.

And this teacher of the law. That comes to Jesus. With this question. He has a. He has a good theology. He knows about God.

He's. Able to agree with Jesus. That there is. Only one true God. Verse 29. He's. Nodding in agreement with Jesus.

That the Lord is one. His theology is. It is good. And this man that we find. In the. In the chapter here. He's a good grasp. Of the law of God.

[8 : 22] He wasn't ignorant. Of the. The Ten Commandments. He wasn't. Ignorant of the Old Testament. Scriptures. He's in agreement with Jesus. That the. The greatest commandment.

Was verse. 30 and 31. To love the Lord your God. With. With all your heart. And with all your soul. With all your mind. With all your strength. The second is this. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus gives that answer. It's the orthodox answer. And this man is impressed. With. With Jesus answer. You have much in common. And it seems that.

To a degree. Jesus. Is impressed with him. And Jesus says to him. In verse 34. You. Are not.

Far. From the kingdom. Of God. He's almost there. He's close.

[9 : 18] To getting in. To the kingdom. Of God. But he's not yet in. That was the terrifying thing. He's not yet in. He's not yet saved.

He's. He's. He's near. He's close. But he's not yet safe. And as we thought about last week. To be. Almost saved.

Is to be wholly. Lost. So. What I want to think about. Today. Is. Is. What. Was it. That kept this man.

Out. Out of the kingdom of God. You know. It wasn't a lack of religion. Because this was one of the most. Religious men.

In that place. At that time. It wasn't. A lack of theological training. Because. This man's whole life. Had been devoted. To. To the. The learning of theology. Wasn't a lack of knowledge.

[10 : 15] Of scriptures. Because he was an expert. In the scriptures. So what was it. That kept this man. Out. Of the kingdom.

Of God. And the answer is. Is actually very simple. And the answer is very clear. He didn't know Jesus. He hadn't come in faith.

To Jesus. And as we know from. John 14. 6. Those who don't come. In faith to Jesus. Those who don't come.

To Jesus. And through Jesus. Don't get to the father. And don't get. Into. The kingdom. Of God.

So the question. Today. Is. A simple one. But it's of. Eternal. Weight. And significance. If we get the answer. To this question.

[11 : 14] Wrong. Doesn't matter. How. Religious. We are. It doesn't. Matter. How much. Of the Bible. We may know. Or even. Be able. To teach. Doesn't matter.

How. Good living. We are regarded. As being. We cannot. Get into heaven. Unless. We get this question.

Right. And the question is. Who is Jesus? Who is Jesus? Jesus? And the answer. To that question. Today. Has two parts.

We have two points. Who is Jesus? Well. He is. The son of David. And he is. The son. Of God. So these are our two points.

For. For today. First of all. We see here. That Jesus. Is the son of David. God. Now. Wherever. Jesus goes.

[12 : 12] We see. That there are crowds. Around him. And we can put on the television. And there can be. An individual. Who for a period. Is the focus. Of media attention. And wherever they go.

They are just. They are just. Intercepted. By crowds. And that is. The kind of image. We have of Jesus. Here. Wherever he goes. People. Are being drawn.

To him. And the reason. That people. Are being drawn. To Jesus. Is because. That. They were saying. On the streets. That Jesus. Maybe Jesus.

Is the Christ. Maybe he is the Messiah. Maybe he is the one. Who's promised. In all the scriptures. That we know. That was the word.

That was on the street. That's what. Was so terrifying. These religious leaders. And indeed. Jesus. When he was asked. This question. Or when it came into.

[13 : 05] Discussion. He. He. Had affirmed. That he. Was. Indeed. The Messiah. That he was. The Christ. Remember the woman. At the well. John chapter 4.

Jesus. Speaks to her. The Samaritan woman. Her life is. A series of disasters. She's thirsting. Thirsting. Thirsting. For something.

For someone. That will satisfy her. She's been through. Half a dozen marriages. String of broken relationships. She's still. Nowhere. And Jesus. Comes to her.

And Jesus. Offers her. That living water. That will bring her. Eternal satisfaction. She hesitates. Initially. She tries to take Jesus. Off course.

And. She says to Jesus. In. In John 4. I know that Messiah. Called Christ. Is coming. When he comes. He will explain. Everything to us.

[14 : 00] Then Jesus. Declared. I who speak to you. Am he. And this woman. The Samaritan woman. She.

Believed. She. Accepted. Jesus. Let me just. Say something about that. Actually. It's. Very often. The least likely.

People. Who. Are. The readiest. To believe. In Jesus. I mean. Let your mind. Wander. Through your family.

And your friends. Let your. Mind. Wander. Through. The communities. That we are part of. Think about some of the. The least likely. People. Who.

You would expect. To walk through the doors. Of any church. Very often. If you have the courage. To speak to them. They are those.

[14 : 58] Whom God. Is doing a work. In their hearts. Although you would never. Believe it. Until you see it. This Samaritan woman.

This woman. Of. Terrible reputation. She. Believes. She becomes the first. Powerful. Evangelist. In. That.

Scene. But. The religious people. The experts. In the scriptures. Those. Who. Were. Best. Qualified.

To spot. The Messiah. they did not believe. They would not believe. Even though all the evidence as it was stacking up was so clearly pointing toward Jesus.

The miracles, the healings, the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the lame walking, demons being cast out, the storm being stilled, thousands being fed from a little boy's packed lunch.

[16 : 01] All these things, these miraculous things were prophesied of the Messiah. And now as the crowd starts to turn and as we see Jesus beginning to suffer and as we see the extent to which Jesus is being despised and rejected, all these things testified to what would happen in the life of the Messiah.

And the teachers of the law, they knew this. But they didn't want this kind of Messiah. And we know there are none so blind as those who do not want to see.

So here in this conversation, Jesus, he sets down another piece of evidence before these religious teachers. And this actually is the final invitation of Jesus to these people who keep coming at him.

And he deals with them firmly. He deals with them with such grace. And he keeps on saying to them, trust me. Turn to me.

And this is actually the final invitation that these particular people will have to trust in Christ. I wonder if there's anybody here this morning and this is your final invitation to trust in Christ.

[17 : 34] They didn't know it. But we now know it. Perhaps for some, they've heard it time and time and time and time again, the gospel message.

Maybe today, it's the final invitation for some. So Jesus, he speaks in verse 35. And while Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, how is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David?

That's the question he brings. Now, for us, if we were asked that question, we might struggle a bit with it. But for the Jew in that time, whether they were trained in theology or not, that was one of the most simple questions that could ever be asked.

Every Jew, from when he was a little boy or a little girl, was taught of the fact that Messiah would come from the line of David. They were looking for the Messiah.

And they were told the Messiah, he'll come from the line of David. He'll be a son of David. So the answer to Jesus' question would have been a very straightforward one.

[18 : 44] They would almost have been perplexed in the question. And just said to Jesus, well, the Messiah comes from the son of David because the Bible says that.

We know that. Everybody knows that. That's how. And they could have gone to 2 Samuel 7 or Psalm 89 or Micah 5 and many other texts and shown how it's prophesied that Messiah would come from the line of David.

So Jesus' question was not a difficult question. But what Jesus doesn't say here, but what they well knew, was that Jesus came from the line of David.

You know, we see a lot of these programs on TV just now where a celebrity of some kind is a bit cloudy on their family history. And so they have some expert who traces their family history all the way back through the lines.

No one had to do that with Jesus. They knew his family line. It was well known. And we could go to Matthew and we could go to Luke and we have the details on the genealogy of Jesus.

[20 : 06] And in both sides of the family tree, we trace the line back to David. The Christ was prophesied to be a son of David.

And Jesus was clearly known to be a son of David. We should pause there because sometimes we move too quickly away from the fact that Jesus was a man.

Who is Jesus? He's a son of David. He was a man. His mother, Mary, carried him in her womb.

He was the child in the manger. In his infancy, in his infancy, Jesus, the Lord of all, was dependent physically on the mother who gave him milk so that its human body would be sustained.

He was a son of David. He had a human body just like ours. He grew through infancy into childhood and then into adulthood.

[21 : 36] And Jesus, he was a man, recognizably a man. Jesus knew what it was to be tired, to have hard, bleeding hands.

after a day in the carpenter's workshop. He knew what it was to be hungry. He knew what it was to be thirsty. He had human emotions.

He knew what it was to rejoice at a wedding service. He knew what it was to stand with a family who were brokenhearted and weak in a funeral.

He knew what it felt like to enjoy the company of friends. And he knew what it was to feel lonely and isolated when friends left him.

Jesus was a son of David. He knew what it felt like to be criticized as you sometimes are.

[22 : 44] He knew what it was to be verbally abused. He knew what it was to be despised and rejected. He knew what it felt like to have someone spit in your face.

He felt the pain of thorns being crushed into his head. He knew what it was like to be nailed to a cross.

He was a son of David. And this is not a point that you and I are encouraged to take hold of by faith.

This is history. Even the most hardened atheists would accept the fact somewhat reluctantly but they would have to accept the fact if they have any kind of academic integrity that Jesus lived.

He's on the pages of history. He's not some imaginary figure. He's not some mythical character who's followed alongside the goblins and the ghouls and the fairies.

[24 : 03] Jesus was a man who's on the pages of history. It's recorded as a fact. A hard, cold, historical fact.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, wrote this. At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. This is not a Christian.

This is a Jewish historian, a well-respected Jewish historian. At this time he wrote there was a wise man who was called Jesus and his conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous and many people from among the Jews and other human nations became his disciples.

Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die and those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive.

It's from a 10th century Arabic text. This is history. Jesus was a son of David.

[25 : 14] He was a man who walked the face of the earth. And the Christian should be so encouraged by that fact.

Jesus understands. If you're a Christian you have a saviour who understands and knows what it's like to walk in your shoes.

You have a saviour who is sympathetic to your situation because he's been there. We don't have a remote God who shouts out words and instructions from afar.

We have a God who not only speaks out his word but as we've read so often in John 1 the word became flesh.

Flesh. Bones. And he made his dwelling amongst us. He was a son of David. And Jesus quietly makes that point as he questions the teachers of the law.

[26 : 34] But he doesn't stop there. Second point. Who is Jesus? He's a son of David. Second point, final point, is he is the son of God.

Now if I was to ask the question here of people, can you tell me your favourite psalm? My guess is that the psalm that would win overwhelmingly is Psalm 23.

Some people would say, well I'd rather Psalm 40, some people would say I like Psalm 100, but I think the majority of people, if we were to put them all together, would say Psalm 23.

And we know it by heart. We have a fellowship here and we have no books and no words on the screen. Somebody will say, let's sing Psalm 23. We all know Psalm 23. Now in Jesus' day, if he was to have asked the teachers of the law, what's your favourite psalm?

It wasn't Psalm 23. It was Psalm 110, hands down. It was quoted more than any other psalm in the New Testament.

[27 : 42] Twelve times or so we'll see a Psalm 110 quoted in the New Testament. And everybody in that place knew it by heart. It's a psalm full of hope. It's a psalm that pointed so clearly forward to the Messiah.

And so Jesus, he takes this very familiar psalm and he asks another question. Verse 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.

David himself calls him Lord. How then can he be his son? And now the teachers of the law are in a corner and they're sweating.

They're scratching their heads because they had no answer. And the word that Jesus highlights here when he speaks about David calling his son Lord, word is not simply a word that conveys respect.

It's a word that was reserved for deity, for God. And so Jesus is saying, how can the great King David, the one who was held up with such reverence and such awe, how can the great King David call one of his sons Lord?

[29 : 17] Answer it. They're all looking at each other. They can't answer it. They couldn't figure it. I remember my sister Aileen, she went through a short phase of calling my mother Peggy, or Paggy it was.

She couldn't get her tongue around Peggy. Peggy was offensive. Paggy was absolutely outrageous. And so it was a phase that it caused me some degree of amusement.

It caused my mother some huge irritation. So the phase was a short phase. It was brought to a quick, sharp, painful end. Because you don't speak to your mother that way.

You show respect in the way that you address your mother and your father. In the ancient Near East, in Jesus' day, that was the case and even more so. A father would be spoken to his sons with huge respect.

But it would be absolutely unheard of for a father to refer to a son or a grandson as their Lord. And yet that's what Jesus does here.

[30 : 35] That's what David does here in that psalm. And Jesus is saying, how can that be? Come on, you're the experts. It's your favorite psalm.

How can this be? How can David refer to his son as Lord? And they had no answer.

But we have an answer. we sang the answer. He, the Lord, came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all.

The one that David refers to in this psalm, even though he was his son who would be in his line, had come down from heaven to earth.

The one whom David refers to as his son and yet his Lord, although he came after him in his family line, he existed long before him in glory.

[31 : 59] even though he was born of the line of David, he was and he is the eternal Lord.

Sinclair Ferguson says David's son could only be his Lord if he existed before him and after him. David's Lord was the eternal son of God.

David's Lord became his son when he was conceived in the womb of Mary and was born in Bethlehem, the city of David.

And as Jesus puts all these pieces together quietly and yet authoritatively, he is showing that Jesus himself is David's Lord.

And Jesus day by day in this week as it progressed, it is showing more and more of his Lordship. Yes, his enemies are coming together and they're coming together in waves to attack him as Psalm 2 prophesied, but we see Jesus here, the anointed one, with such wisdom and such authority putting his enemies, these powerful men, one by one, attack by attack, he's putting them under his feet.

[33 : 37] And we know that on the Friday of this week, it's only Wednesday at this point, Jesus' enemy, Satan, would fly at him with all the force of hell as he's taken to the cross.

But on Sunday, everyone would see that Satan and sin and death and hell had been defeated, trampled under the feet of Jesus, who rose from the dead.

how could Jesus do all this? That's the question. How could Jesus do all this?

The son of David, a human being, flesh and blood, how could he do all this?

How could he defeat Satan? how could he overcome death? How could he make an end of all our sin?

[34 : 57] How could he open the door of heaven for those who trust him? And the answer was and is that he is the eternal son of God.

God yes, he was the son of David and he needed to be the son of David if he was to be our substitute, if he was to stand in our stead, if he was to take our sin upon himself, if he was to be our representative, he needed to be the son of David, but only the son of God could be our savior.

And that's what the teachers of the law had to see. That's what this man who spoke with Jesus had to see, if he was to make a move from not far to right in to the kingdom of God.

And that's what you and I have to see. If we are to be saved, if we are to have any assurance of a place in the kingdom of heaven, we have to see that Jesus is the son of David, God, but he is the son of God.

What happened next just as we finish? Did the teachers of the law, did the teachers of the law repent and believe when they were confronted and understood what Jesus was teaching?

[36 : 56] No, they didn't. They gritted their teeth and they persevered in their plan to kill Jesus. How tragic.

Even though they were so close to Jesus, even though they heard his sermons, even though they witnessed his miracles in abundance, even though they saw so much, they would never see the kingdom of heaven.

Rather, they would career at pace down the road to hell. Don't be like them. Don't be like them.

What about the crowds? Did they fall on their knees and worship Jesus as Lord? No, they didn't.

They listened, verse 37, to Jesus with delight. They sat in the chairs, sang the songs.

[38 : 19] They said, I enjoyed that sermon. They listened to it with delight. was that enough to save them? No, it wasn't.

They ambled on down the road to hell, tasting sermons, enjoying hearing about Jesus, but most of them never trusted him.

Don't be like them. this Christmas, taking the wonder of it all. Jesus, the child who was born, the son of David, and yet the son of God.

It's an awesome story, taking the wonder and the delight of the story of Christmas. But don't stop there.

Fall on your knees and worship him. Don't linger close to the borders of the kingdom of heaven.

[39 : 39] It's absolutely the most dangerous place you could ever be. Ask Jesus to take you right in because he's the only one who can.

We'll pray. Heavenly Father, we pray that you would enable us to see Jesus for who he was and is.

The son of David, the word became flesh and dwelt among us. And yet the son of God, Jesus who came to stand in our place, to be the representative who would take our sin upon himself.

And yet Jesus, the God man, who would come to this world to be our savior. there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin.

He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in. We see Sadducees and Pharisees and scribes and religious leaders who are trained to the max and yet who rejected Jesus.

[41 : 05] We see crowds who delighted to listen to Jesus. and yet never fell to their knees and who were lost.

Help us, we pray, to see Jesus for who he is and to fall on our knees in worship so that we will not be those who are lost not far from the kingdom, but so that we would be those who know that when we are called from time, we will have a place in the kingdom of God that has been prepared for us by the Christ whom we know and whom we worship.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all, both now and forever more.

Amen. Amen.