

Mark 12:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple,
How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?

Analysis

Jesus shifts from answering questions to asking one: **How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?** (Πῶς λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς νιὸς Δαυίδ ἐστιν;) This isn't denying Messiah's Davidic lineage—both Matthew and Luke trace Jesus' genealogy through David, and Jesus accepts the title 'Son of David' (Mark 10:47-48). Rather, Jesus challenges incomplete messianic understanding. Scribal teaching emphasized Messiah as David's descendant, a human king who would restore Israel's throne. This expectation, rooted in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 and Psalm 89, was politically charged—many anticipated violent overthrow of Rome.

By asking 'how' (πῶς, pōs) the scribes reach this conclusion, Jesus probes the adequacy of their interpretation. If Messiah is merely David's human descendant, how can David call him 'Lord' (v. 37)? The question exposes the limitation of purely human categories for understanding Christ. Messiah is indeed David's son (humanity) but also David's Lord (divinity)—the God-man who fulfills messianic promises in unexpected ways. Jesus teaches **in the temple**, publicly challenging official interpretation in Judaism's authoritative center.

Historical Context

Jewish messianic expectation in the first century heavily emphasized political-military deliverance. The Psalms of Solomon (written c. 50 BC after Roman conquest) prayed for a Davidic warrior-king to defeat Gentile oppressors. Zealots

advocated armed rebellion. Even Jesus' disciples expected imminent establishment of the kingdom (Acts 1:6). 2 Samuel 7 promised David an eternal dynasty; Isaiah 9:6-7 and 11:1-10 described an ideal Davidic king. But scribal interpretation often missed the Suffering Servant passages (Isaiah 42, 49, 50, 53) that revealed Messiah's path to glory through suffering. Jesus repeatedly corrected this misunderstanding, teaching that the Son of Man must suffer, die, and rise (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). His question in the temple—asked days before His crucifixion—presses hearers to reconsider who Messiah truly is.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How did first-century Jewish expectations of a conquering political Messiah blind many to recognizing Jesus' true messianic identity?
2. What modern 'messianic' expectations (personal prosperity, political power, national triumph) might obscure Christ's actual call to servant-hearted suffering love?
3. Why is it essential to affirm both Jesus' full humanity (Son of David) and full divinity (David's Lord)?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγοντος διδάσκων ἐν τῷ
And answered Jesus and said while he taught in G3588 G2424 G3004 G1321 G1722 G3588

ἰερῷ Πῶς λέγοντος οἱ γραμματεῖς ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς
the temple How and said the scribes that G3588 G1122 G3754 G3588 G5547

υἱὸς ἐστιν Δαβὶδ
the Son is of David
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