

Mark 12:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

Analysis

David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son?

Jesus' rhetorical question exposes the inadequacy of merely human categories for understanding Messiah. If Messiah is only David's biological descendant, David wouldn't address him as κύριος (kyrios = 'Lord'), a title of superior authority. The word 'whence' (πόθεν, pothen = 'from where,' 'how') probes the origin and nature of Messiah's sonship. The answer: Messiah is David's son according to the flesh (Romans 1:3) but David's Lord according to divine nature (Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:9-11).

This christological riddle points to the Incarnation—the eternal Son of God taking human flesh. Jesus is fully God (thus David's Lord) and fully man (thus David's son). The scribes' incomplete theology couldn't reconcile these realities; Jesus reveals them as necessary for Messiah's saving work. Mark notes **the common people heard him gladly** (ὁ πολὺς ὄχλος ἤκουεν αὐτοῦ ἡδέως)—Jesus' teaching delighted ordinary folk even as it confounded religious experts. The adverb ἡδέως (hēdeōs = 'gladly,' 'with pleasure') suggests enthusiastic reception. The crowds sensed Jesus' authority and were drawn to truth, even when they didn't fully grasp its implications.

Historical Context

This teaching occurred in the temple during the final week of Jesus' life. The religious establishment, threatened by Jesus' popularity and authority, sought

grounds to arrest Him (Mark 11:18; 12:12). Jesus' public questioning of scribal Christology challenged their authority and exposed their inadequate understanding. Within days, these same scribes would demand His crucifixion, ironically fulfilling Psalm 110's prophecy that God would defeat Messiah's enemies. The 'common people' (ὁ πολὺς ὄχλος, literally 'the large crowd') represents ordinary Jews who lacked formal theological training but recognized Jesus' wisdom. This dynamic—religious elites rejecting Jesus while common folk embraced Him—fulfilled Isaiah 29:13-14 and showed that spiritual insight isn't the province of human learning but divine revelation (Matthew 11:25-27).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the mystery of Christ's dual nature (fully God and fully man) humble human reason while inviting faith?
2. Why did Jesus' teaching attract 'common people' while alienating religious experts, and what does this reveal about the nature of saving faith?
3. In what ways does contemporary Christianity need to recover the scandal of the Incarnation—God becoming human flesh?

Interlinear Text

αὐτοῦ	οὕν	Δαβὶδ	λέγει	αὐτοῦ	κύριον	καὶ	πόθεν	υἱός
him	therefore	David	calleth	him	Lord	And	whence	son
G846	G3767	G1138	G3004	G846	G2962	G2532	G4159	G5207

αὐτοῦ	ἐστίν	καὶ	ὁ	πολὺς	ὄχλος	ἤκουεν	αὐτοῦ
him	is he	And	G3588	the common	people	heard	him
G846	G2076	G2532		G4183	G3793	G191	G846

ἠδέως
gladly
G2234