

Matthew 22:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

Analysis

He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord (λέγει αὐτοῖς· Πῶς οὖν Δαυὶδ ἐν πνεύματι καλεῖ αὐτὸν κύριον/legei autois· Pōs oun Dauid en pneumati kalei auton kyrion). Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1, 'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool' (verse 44). The phrase **in spirit** (ἐν πνεύματι/en pneumati) indicates David spoke by prophetic inspiration of the Holy Spirit—not merely human opinion but divine revelation. This establishes Psalm 110 as messianic prophecy requiring fulfillment.

The question poses theological puzzle: David, Israel's great king and Messiah's ancestor, calls Messiah **Lord** (κύριον/kyrion)—title of authority, sovereignty, deity. In Hebrew culture, fathers don't call sons 'Lord'; ancestors don't address descendants with supreme titles of respect. How can David's descendant simultaneously be David's superior and master? The only answer is incarnation—Messiah is both human (David's biological descendant through Mary, making Him David's son) and divine (eternal Son of God, making Him David's Lord). Jesus forces the Pharisees to confront the mystery they cannot solve without recognizing His deity.

Historical Context

Psalm 110 was universally recognized as messianic in Second Temple Judaism. The Targums (Aramaic paraphrases), Dead Sea Scrolls, and rabbinic literature consistently interpreted it as prophecy about the coming Davidic king. However,

Jewish interpretation focused on Messiah's earthly reign, missing the implications of David calling Him 'Lord.' Jesus's exegetical question exposes this blind spot—they accepted the psalm's messianic reference but failed to recognize its testimony to Messiah's divinity. The New Testament quotes Psalm 110 more than any other Old Testament passage (cited or alluded to over 30 times), using it to prove Jesus's deity, exaltation, priesthood, and coming judgment. The early church saw Jesus's resurrection and ascension as fulfilling 'Sit at my right hand.'

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Psalm 110:1 prove that Messiah must be both fully human (David's son) and fully divine (David's Lord)?
2. What does Jesus's question reveal about the necessity of divine revelation in Scripture for understanding His identity?
3. How does the New Testament's frequent use of Psalm 110 demonstrate Jesus's fulfillment of messianic prophecy?

Interlinear Text

λέγων αὐτὸν Πῶς οὖν Δαβὶδ ἐν πνεύματι κύριον

He saith	him	How	then	doth David	in	spirit	Lord
G3004	G846	G4459	G3767	G1138	G1722	G4151	G2962

αὐτὸν καλεῖ λέγων

him	call	He saith
G846	G2564	G3004

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 23:2 (Spirit): The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

Revelation 4:2 (Spirit): And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Revelation 1:10 (Spirit): I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Hebrews 3:7 (Spirit): Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

Acts 1:16 (Spirit): Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

2 Peter 1:21 (Spirit): For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Mark 12:36 (Spirit): For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.