



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Suffering Savior, Mark 12:35-37

"The Question About David's Son"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Tonight our subject is "The Question About David's Son." And I want you to turn with me to Mark chapter 12 again, and we are going to look at verses 35 through 37 and also at Psalm 110. Mark chapter 12, verse 35 through verse 37, and then Psalm 110,

"And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? 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. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly." (And I think I will read a couple of more verses because I will refer to them later on). "And he said unto them in his doctrine, beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

And now let's turn over to the Old Testament to Psalm 110 and will you listen as I read the seven verses of this psalm. Psalm 110, verses 1 through 7,

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (You recognize, of course, this is the text that our Lord cited and which was the basis of his questioning of the scribes). "And the Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the head" (that is singular in the Hebrew text) "he shall wound the head over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head."

"The Question About David's Son." The day of questions, with this last question, draws to a close. Our Lord's enemies, well prepared no doubt by on points selected beforehand, sought to untangle him in his talk. They may have intended, on the one hand, to discredit him as a teacher, or on the other hand, to discover grounds for accusation before the civil authority. If they could find something that he said which implied that he was a rival of Cesar, this would be the means of getting rid of him and having Rome do it at the same time. On the other hand, they were no doubt disturbed over the fact that the common people were hearing our Lord gladly. And so if they could think up some question that might cause our Lord to be embarrassed in front of the multitudes, then they could discredit him as a teacher and then in the same process accredit themselves as being better teachers than they really were.

But never were the tables more effectively overturned and turned against them. His straightforwardness put their duplicity to shame, for it became evident, as one heard our Lord speak, that he was speaking truly and honestly and directly and they were standing around seeking to ensnare him in his talk and so it became evident that they were full of duplicity where as he, on the other hand, was simple and straightforward and full of integrity. And furthermore, his skill not only enabled him to answer their questions, but he turned their spears against their own breasts. And so the things on which they thought to ensnare him were the things by which they themselves were ensnared.

Finally, having asked and answered the question concerning the Great Commandment, there was a large and significant silence in the multitude. And in the midst of the silence, the Lord Jesus, who had been badgered by them, now badgers them with a counter question, and it is one that takes them by such surprise that they are left dumbfounded. If it is true that our Lord Jesus has answered all of their questions, to put it in our language, he has trumped all of their aces and he trumps their finest ace with his own question. They had asked him just previously by what authority he did the things that he had done. For example, after the cleansing of the temple, they had asked him by what authority he did these things.

In addition, they asked him by what authority he had taught. And they had asked him, when he had entered Jerusalem, to silence those among the people who were calling out, Hosanna, to the son of David. And so this implied that he ought not to have such a title as the son of David. And so the Lord Jesus, in an attempt and a successful attempt to silence them, is going to show that the title does not give him too much. It's not too much to call him son of David. As a matter of fact, that title gives him too little. He is more than son of David; he is son of David, but he is more than son of David. And his answer is from Psalm 110 in verse 1, a psalm that is cited in the New Testament more than any other psalm.

And because it is cited more in the New Testament than any other psalm, I think we ought to begin, tonight, the exposition itself by turning back to Psalm 110 which is a kind of compendium, which is the basis of his remarks, and I want to give you a kind of compendium of what that psalm contains. It is the psalm of the messianic priest-king. In other words, the one of whom it speaks is not only a king, but he is also a priest and a messianic king-priest together. It is, I think, the first place in the Old Testament where it becomes very plain that the king is also a priest.

There is a simple threefold division of the psalm and the first part of the psalm contains the divine oracle of sovereignty and there are several important themes within the first three verses. And the first concerns the session of the king, or the Messiah. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now, it is evident from this statement in Psalm 110, verse 1 that the king is divine. In the first place, David calls him Lord. He says, "The Lord said unto my Lord." "Jehovah said unto my Lord." So it is evident by the expression, "my Lord," that David refers to this person who sits on the right hand of the throne of the Lord and he calls him "my Lord." So it's evident, then, that David calls him Lord, and if David calls him Lord then I think we have good reason for saying that he is a divine king.

Furthermore, "The Lord has said to my Lord," David says, "Sit thou at my right hand." Now "Sit" excludes human beings, for the oriental expression referred to reception and to the dignity and dominion of the one who was on the throne. So for God to say, "Sit at my right hand," meant that the person who sat at his right hand was received into the dignity and authority and the power of the throne itself. And even among human kings in oriental times, in oriental lands, to say that a certain person was to sit at the right hand of the reigning king was to receive that person into the dignity and the dominion of the one who was on the throne. So there are two reasons for thinking that this Lord of David's whom he calls, "my Lord," is divine.

But there is a third reason. The same one who is referred to as "my Lord" in verse 1, is also referred to in verse 4. And there we read, "The Lord," or Jehovah, "hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou," that is the one who sits on the right hand of Jehovah, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." And so it has stated that he is not only a priest, but an eternal priest. So he is a king who sits on the right hand of Jehovah; he is called by David, "my Lord;" and he is an eternal priest. So it is evident that the king, of whom David speaks here, must be a divine king.

I think there are some other things that we can say about this king just from looking at that text. In the first place, you'll notice it says, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." So the king who sits at the right hand of the throne of Jehovah is a king, or David's Lord, who has enemies. Now, it is evident, if he has enemies then he must have had some personal contact with individuals, for you do not have enemies until you have some personal contact. So he must have had personal contact with individuals who are referred to as his enemies. And I would also gather that it is a reasonable deduction to make from this that he must have visited the place where the enemies are in order for them to become his enemies.

And finally, since we read, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," I believe it's a reasonable deduction, though I cannot prove this one, that he was with the enemies at the time that the oracle was spoken, ideally. And so what this is, then, is a word from the Father to David's Lord to the effect that he wishes to see him exalted at his right hand and that Jehovah is going to engage in an activity by which he is going to bring all of the enemies of the Lord, who sits at his right hand, into subjection to him.

Now, it is evident that that text, then, is an extremely important text, for it refers to the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It refers to the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it also suggests that the purpose of the creation is being worked out by the Father in

order that everything might be brought ultimately into subjection to the son who sits on the right hand of the Father.

Now that is what is stated in verse 1. We cannot analyze all of the parts of this psalm. It is evident from that first verse that there must be a great deal in this psalm that one could meditate upon, and I want to assure you that you could study the psalm for days and days and not exhaust it. The second verse does speak about the king's return to reign: "And the Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion," and then the command is given from the Father to the Son, "rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." And so we have a statement made that the Son is going to come back and he is going to rule in the midst of enemies. And he is going to have subjects at that time when he returns: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." In other words, the king is not only going to come back to reign, but he is going to find subjects.

Now, a king is not a king if he does not have any subjects, and our Lord's subjects are referred to here. And his are those who are willing in the day of his power; his subjects do not burn their draft cards, they are individuals who are willing to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. This, I think in the light of the context in the whole of the Bible, is the willing service of the Jewish remnant and their converts at the time that our Lord Jesus comes back to establish his kingdom through the power of the Father. They are willing subjects. One of the things that we have learned about the Israelis is that they can carry on a successful military campaign. And were it not for the fact that the Russians, out of a sense of urgent anxiety, managed to bring to stop the latest war, we would have seen the Arabs again defeated and humiliated in the war which they themselves started with the greatest of advantages.

One of the reasons that the Israelis are fighters such as they are is because they have the strictest of discipline and they have an army that is characterized by tremendous bravery. It is said, I don't know how true it is because I haven't served in the Israeli army

recently; it is said that when the Israeli officers call a charge, they do not say, "forward" they say, "follow me." And every officer is expected to take the lead at every charge. The result of this, of course, is that twenty-five to thirty percent of the men who are slain or injured and wounded in their campaigns are officers. It is not surprising, but it is an evidence of the dedication of the men that make up that army.

Well, it is that kind of an army that the Lord Jesus has. He has people who are willing. This verse has been rather woefully perverted by some, but on the other hand it is a text, which if any text in the Old Testament stresses the fact, that those who serve our Lord Jesus Christ are willing. Now, those who do not like the doctrine of the irresistible grace of God do not like this text. It has been supposed by some that this text does not teach the irresistible operation of the grace of God on the souls of the elect, thereby making them willing to receive Christ as Savior. This is a doctrine which our Armenian brethren and friends do not like at all, but it is a doctrine that is found in the word of God. It is that God makes men willing. If we read our Bibles correctly, we understand that men, by nature, are not willing.

And consequently, if we see individuals who are willing, then it is evident that God has worked in their hearts. The Lord Jesus said, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Now it is evident from that text that they were prevented by the fact that they were unwilling from coming to our Lord. The Bible makes it very plain that no man can come to the Son except the Father which have sent the Son, draw him. That means that everybody is unwilling. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, the work in the hearts of men, to make them willing when they are naturally unwilling.

Now, every one of you in this auditorium who has ever come to our Lord Jesus Christ was unwilling. Now, maybe you did not realize the fact that you were unwilling, but you were unwilling naturally. Everybody is unwilling naturally. "There is none that seeketh after God," no not one. Now that is a fundamental text about which we could have no disagreement at all. Therefore, if a person seeks after God, then what simple

deduction can the most unintelligent Christian obviously make? Well, if a person seeks after God, it is because God has wrought in his heart a change so that now, instead of being a person who does not seek after God, he now seeks after God. Instead of being a person who was unwilling, he has become willing. Now, that means then that he has been a recipient of a work of the Holy Spirit by which we are made willing when we were unwilling. Now that, in simple language, is the doctrine of the infallible grace of God and you cannot understand the bible and salvation if you do not understand the doctrine of the infallible grace of God.

When I preach to people, and to a number of you I have preached. When I preach to people, as you know, there are two kinds of responses that you get: you get a response from those who are willing and then you get a response from those who are not willing. Now, if I see some or if there are some, whether I see them or not, who are not willing, then it is evident that they do not belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, if there are some that are willing, well then we can tell that they are the children of God by the fact that they are willing, that they have responded. That very fact indicates that the Holy Spirit has been at work in their hearts.

Now, if I look out on the audience, and if it were given me to understand exactly what was happening, and if I could really see that some were willing and some were not willing, then I would be forced to one or two conclusions. In the case of those that were willing, the Holy Spirit has been working and he has wrought this wonderful change in them by which they, who were unwilling, have been made willing and they have come to know Jesus Christ as Savior. But in the case of those who are unwilling, I must conclude one or two things. Number one, it is not the day of their willingness yet. In other words, the Holy Spirit has not, in his own sovereign purposes, he has not wrought the change by which they move from unwillingness to willingness. Or they are not the children of God. It is just as plain as that. So it is not surprising to me that we read, "In the day of our Lord's power, his people shall be willing," for they will be the recipients of the work of

the Holy Spirit in bringing them to a knowledge of the king. That same principle that pertains with reference to the Messianic king and his future victory is the principle that pertains today. So I ask you a simple question tonight: Are you willing? Are you part of our Lord's people who are willing in the day of his power?

Now, if you happen to be sitting in the audience and saying, "Well I think everybody has freewill and we can become willing or not willing at our own wills." Then I ask you, "Why, at this very moment, do you not turn to our Lord Jesus Christ and receive him as your personal Savior?" Well if you do not do that, it's because you are unwilling. And the very fact that you are not turning to him is evidence of the fact that you are unwilling and it is evidence, I think also, of the truthfulness of just what we have been saying. Now, I don't want to labor that point too much, but it was standing out on that text so high that I couldn't pass by it to the next without paying some attention to it.

In the 4th verse, we have the divine oath of priesthood. Now, while gazing on the vision of the warrior king, David's ear hears a word confirmed by divine oath. And this is the theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Now, it is evident, then, from this text that David's messianic king, who sits at the right hand of the throne of the majesty, is not only a king but also a priest. And in our Lord Jesus Christ are united the two offices that are always separated in the Old Testament. For remember, in the Old Testament, the king was of the tribe of Judah, but the priest was of the tribe of Levi. But in the case of the great priest-king of the future, he shall be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. He will not be a priest in the ironic line, but he will be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. And so in the case of our Lord, we shall have a king who is also a priest. He will rule over the inhabited earth and over the kingdom that shall be brought there by the Father for the Son, and he will also serve as priest. He will be the mediator between the Father and others. So he is a priest-king.

Now, the third part of the psalm describes the divinely wrought victory. After each one of these oracles, the oracle of verse one, the psalmist reflects on the significance of it in verses 2 and 3. And now after the oracle of verse 4, in the oath of God, the psalmist reflects on that and he describes the defeat of the enemies of the Lord in brief but powerful strokes. The Gentile world power, characterized by the beast and the horns and his armies, they shall be overthrown and defeated by a lamb. Isn't that an amazing thing, that this great, wild beast shall be overthrown and defeated by a lamb?

But this is the biblical picture. In the 6th verse, the psalmist speaks of the doom of those who shall oppose the Lord Jesus Christ, and we learn here that God in heaven is a laughing and a judging God and not just a sweet, gentle, old Father who sits on the throne and overlooks all of our petty little sins. The God who sits upon the throne is a God who is most holy and he shall judge among the nations. There is also reference to the demonic leader of the forces who oppose the king-priest in the reference to the head over many countries in verse 6 which seems to be a reference to the beast who is the tool of satan in these last days of the battle before the Lord's second coming. And finally the 7th verse speaks in figurative fashion of the king's diligence in carrying out his task.

Now this is Psalm 110. I'm sure our Lord Jesus had meditated often on Psalm 110 and when we get to heaven, we shall have an expired explanation of Psalm 110. And when we get there, you'll be able to compare the exposition that you get there with that little brief exposition that I have just given. And I have a hunch that if Paul is the expositor, he'll stress that text, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," because that's good Pauline truth.

Now let's turn to the collision that our Lord had with the scribes over this text. So we return to Mark in chapter 12, in verse 35 through verse 37. You can tell from these words of these three verses that we are going to look at that the Lord Jesus offers a question to the scribes that is based upon two fundamental principles. Number one: the psalm is a Davidic psalm. He does not doubt that this psalm was written by David. He

says, "For David himself said by the Holy Spirit." He said that David was inspired by the Spirit and that he wrote Psalm 110. Now, some of the commentators say, "It doesn't make a whole lot of difference that we now know that David did not write Psalm 110, the truth is still there."

But I want to tell you it makes a whole lot of difference to me. If the text of the word of God says that Jesus said David wrote this by the Holy Spirit, then it makes a great deal of difference to me whether David wrote this psalm or not. Because if our Lord could be mistaken here or if our text can be mistaken in something that is so fundamental, which is repeated in the other gospel accounts, then I must confess, my trust in the other things that this Bible has to say is considerable weakened. I'm not going to say that I would not have any faith if I were to find some error in the Bible, but I would like to say, very plainly, I don't think there are any errors in the original texts of the Bible. But if I should find some and if it could be shown that there were some, it would do a great deal of damage to my faith. It would make me read the word of God in a quite different spirit from the way in which I read it now.

But this argument rests upon the fundamental axiom that the psalm is Davidic and second, it rests upon the axiom that the psalm is messianic. That is, it is written by David and it has to do with the messianic king. And I might also add this, that the Jews must have thought these things too, because otherwise, our Lord's argument would have lacked cogency. And they did not say, "But wait a minute, David didn't write the psalm." Nor did they say, "But wait a minute, Psalm 110 doesn't have to do with the messianic king, it doesn't have to do with David's Lord." They accepted these axioms upon which our Lord handled this text.

Well, let's look at the question. It's very simple. He poses the question in the silence and the terrible silence, because no one was daring to ask him any question and so he filled the vacuum with his question. He said, "Now how do the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David?" Well they all said that the Messiah was the son of David

and so that is something that they all would agree with. "For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now the scribes say that the Messiah is David's son. But David, in the psalm about the Messiah which we all know is about the Messiah, he said, "The Lord said to my Lord." And so apparently the Messiah is to David, David's Lord. Now, the scribes say that he is David's son. David said he is his Lord. "David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly." Now you can see the question that our Lord poses is a very simple one: Is he David's son or is he David's Lord?

Now, the answer of critics today is quite interesting. Many of the contemporary critics of the word of God and those who write commentaries on the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke where this query of our Lord is expounded, many of them say that this is an announcement by the Lord Jesus that he was not claiming Davidic descent nor was he attaching any significance to it whatsoever. He is not claiming Davidic descent. That is what they say this particular question implies; Jesus is not claiming descent from David.

Now, I want to pose some objections to that. In the first place, this view runs counter to the belief of the early Christians, for if there is one thing that they are united on, it is the fact that our Lord Jesus is of Davidic descent. It is plain they all regarded him as the Messiah. There is no question about that. They speak of him as Christ, the Christ, Christ Jesus, Jesus Christ our Lord. No question that they regarded him as the Messiah, but there is no question also that they regarded him to be of the seed of David. If you open the Gospel of Matthew, right in the opening chapter in which we have the genealogy, you will discover that, there, our Lord's genealogy is traced back through David. Then if you turn to the genealogy in the Book of Luke, you will discover that in the tracing of the genealogy of our Lord, all the way back to Adam, it is through David. And so the tradition found in the Gospel of Mathew and the tradition found in the Gospel

of Luke, and they are not the same traditions, these traditions agree in the fact that Jesus is the son of David.

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul, writing some time after this in the Epistle to the Romans, in the very first chapter of that epistle, lays it down as something that is important, the fact that our Lord Jesus is of the seed of David according to the flesh. He says, "The gospel concerns his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." And so Paul believed that the Lord Jesus was of the seed of David according to the flesh. It would have been a strange interpretation for Paul for someone to say that our Lord Jesus is really disclaiming Davidic descent. He would not have understood that interpretation at all and I think he would have been the first to attempt to refute it.

And then in 2 Timothy chapter 2, in verse 8, in a book which some of our contemporary scholars say that the Apostle Paul did not write, I personally again think that he wrote it and I am happy to report that much of the latest scholarship concerning the pastoral epistles affirms the Pauline authorship of these epistles. But in this particular 2nd chapter, in the 8th verse of 2 Timothy, Paul says, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." And then just to give you one other passage in which we have this same thing in the tradition of the early church. In John's Revelation chapter 5, in verse 5 we read, "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." And in that passage, he is speaking of the Messiah, the messianic king, and he affirms that he is the lion of the tribe of Judah. So in contrast to the answer of contemporary criticism, this view that Jesus is disclaiming Davidic descent does not agree with the belief of the early Christians.

And secondly, the Old Testament also clearly sets forth the view that the Messiah is to be of the seed of David. Now, I'm going to spare you reading all of the passages that we could read at this point. If you want to put them down in your notes you can.

You can look up Isaiah chapter 9, verses 2 through 7; Isaiah chapter 11, verses 1 through 9; Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 5 through verse 8; Jeremiah chapter 33, verse 14 through verse 18; and then that favorite book of most of you which you are so familiar, Ezekiel chapter 34, verses 23 and 24, and chapter 27 and verse 24.

Thirdly, not only does the Old Testament agree that our Lord is the Messiah and is of Davidic descent, not only do the early Christians claim that our Lord is the Messiah and of Davidic descent, such a denial on the part of our Lord of his Davidic descent would have furnished his opponents with a major ground for attack against him. If it were our Lord's intention to disclaim descent from David the king, then those enemies of his, which were waiting for some word by which he might ensnare himself, would immediately say, "Ah, we've got it, because the Messiah must be of the seed of David and he is saying he is not of the seed of David, therefore, he cannot be the Messiah." But we read of no attack in any one of the four gospels against our Lord's Davidic descent. Wherever you read in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they all agree that everybody agreed that he was the descendant of David who possessed the right to the throne. No one ever questioned that. They simply questioned the fact that he, himself, was, at that point, the messianic king. They never questioned that he was entitled to sit upon the throne by reason of the fact that he inherited legal right through Joseph, his father. They never questioned that, they just said, "It's not the time for the Messiah to come and, therefore, you are not that Messiah." They never questioned his legal right. Not once in the New Testament do we have any evidence that our Lord's legal right was ever questioned. Everywhere there is agreement that he had legal right to the throne of David.

Now then, what was the purpose of our Lord, then, in asking the question? Well, they had questioned the authority of the Lord Jesus. They had questioned the authority of his teaching. He wishes to show them that the title, "Son of David," while true, is not exalted enough. It is true, but it is inadequate and it is inadequate by David's own words. He is not only David's son, but he is also David's Lord. And unless we give our Lord both

titles, "Son of David" and "Son of God," we do not give him his rightful authority. This is why our Lord brought up this question. He wanted to force them to answer the question, "Who is the Messiah?" And they were saying, "He's David's son." He wanted them to add to that, "He is David's son and he is David's Lord," "He is David's son and he is the Son of God," "He is David's son and he is the one who sits at the right hand of the throne of God." Our Lord wanted them to say, "David's Messiah is possessed of human nature, he is of the seed of David according to the flesh, but he is also possessed of divine nature because he is Son of God by the resurrection from the dead." And so in these two sides of our Lord's nature, we have the full story of just who he is. Now that is why our Lord asked the question.

Now let me say a word about the conclusion that may be drawn from this. I think we can summarize the conclusions in these two statements which I have put in the outline above. First, Jesus is David's son, the Messiah. And second, B, Jesus is David's Lord, the Messiah. And in the light of this we must give him his full deity and reject all Unitarian blasphemies. This means, in effect, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but at the same time, God is a God who subsists in more than one person. We would have learned from Psalm 110, not the Doctrine of the Trinity, but the Doctrine of Plurality in the God head, because there is David's Lord sitting at the right hand of Yahweh or Jehovah above.

So our Lord, then, must be given full deity. No one has yet discovered the word that the Lord Jesus ought to have said but did not say. None have ever suggested the better word that he might have said. No action of our Lord Jesus has ever shocked our moral since when we have studied the Scriptures. None has ever fallen short of the idea. Jesus Christ, we grant, is full of surprises, but the surprises of which he is full are the surprises of perfection. Our Lord Jesus is possessed of the fullness of deity. You are never amazed, one day, by his greatness and the next by his littleness. You are quite amazed that he is incomparably better than you could have expected. And the more that

you study his character, the more amazed you are by the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is fully God. He is tender without being weak. He is strong without being coarse. Now, I am very coarse at times. I hope I am strong, but I am also coarse. Our Lord is tender without being weak, and he is strong without being coarse. He is lowly without being servile. He has conviction without intolerance. Now, we could learn a lot from that. He has enthusiasm without fanaticism and he has holiness without Pharisaism. He has passion without prejudice. This man alone never made a false step never struck a jarring note. He is the Son of God.

The New England dreamer and seer, Bronson Alcott, once visited England. I love this story. When he reached England, he had a chance to talk with Carlyle. And in the midst of his conversation with Carlyle, he said that he could sincerely say, just as much as Jesus, that he was one with the Father. And then Carlyle replied, "Yes, but Jesus got men to believe him." That's the difference. There are people who go around saying that we are just as much one with God as Jesus Christ was. They even go so far as to say that we have the same spark of divinity within us that Jesus Christ did. They even tell us that we are just as much a Son of God as Jesus Christ was a Son of God. He just happened to realize his potential a little bit more than we. But we are able to realize our potential, but the difference is that he did get men to believe the things that he said about himself, whereas nobody ever believes those things about you. Now that's true, and you can make all of those ridiculous statements and your closest friends know that that is not true of you. You've a long way to go before you even approach those things that are set forth such as that in the word of God.

I've always been entranced by a story about a preacher in Baltimore by the name of Dr. Fuller. He lived a couple of generations ago, but he was a very lovely kind of a man. He is the kind of man that inhabits the pulpits of most of our lukewarm churches. He is the kind of man who would not plainly and clearly say, "I don't believe in Jesus Christ." He would talk about believing in Jesus Christ, but nevertheless, he loved to make

it nice and sweet, you know. And so in the morning, he spoke very earnestly about Christian unity. He preached on the necessity and duty of magnifying the things that unite professing Christians and minimizing the things that divide believers. There is a place for that; there is a small place for that, but there is a place for that. And I do believe that you should not maximize the things that cause Christians to differ. But listen, if in minimizing the things that differ, that divide, we minimize truth that has hold upon our heart as being truth if it is our conviction, then we are just compromising the truth that we say the Holy Spirit has taught us.

Well, he preached that morning along this line and he represented the truth and the light of the heavenly state, showing that it's not worthwhile, in this world, to make so much of that which we shall make so little of when we meet fellow believers above. And in order to show the absurdity of differing over small things in the Christian faith and being jealous of one another, he pictured heaven and he pictured those that inhabited heaven as looking around to find their fellow Christians who belonged to the same denomination that they did. And he pictured, for example, the Baptists, when they got to heaven, looking around for people who believed in emersion, and the Presbyterians looking around for those who were all vulgar on the outside and a little vague on the inside, as we were talking about last week. And the Episcopalians, when they got there, they looked around for those who believed in true apostolic succession. And the Methodists, who managed to get there, they looked around for people who had the same desires that the Methodists had and the same peculiar beliefs.

Well, that was his story. You know, it's very similar to the kinds of story that they tell today, the jokes that you often hear. I guess I have heard this one a thousand times. Have you heard about heaven and the description of how the angel took a new arrival in heaven, and how he was taking him down the street and he was showing him, now over here are the Episcopalians, and over here are the Presbyterians, and over here are the Methodists, and over here are the Lutherans, but then the angle said, "Shh, don't say

anything. Over there are the Baptists, and they think they are the only ones here."

[laughing] That always draws a big laugh, you know, and it's built upon the same kind of thing that Mr. Fuller was talking about.

So anyway he finished his message that morning and at the close of the message a person came up and said, "Dr. Fuller, I am surprised at your lack of charity. You really did not represent any Unitarians at all as being in heaven." And so Dr. Fuller said, realizing what he had done that morning, he said, "Now I want you to come out tonight and if you come out tonight, I'll give you a glimpse as to the feelings of a Unitarian when he gets to heaven." And so that night, he began to preach and he said, "Now I want you to imagine a Unitarian with me tonight and I want you to imagine that this Unitarian is with John the apostle on the Isle of Patmos and he is with John at the time that God gave him some of those great visions about heaven itself. And let's just imagine that the Unitarian is able to enter into the doors of heaven and take a look around at what he sees."

And so he began to preach and he said, "Now, the first thing that the Unitarian and John see is, they see the throne and the book that is lying there in the hand of the man who is upon the throne in the 5th chapter of the Book of Revelation, and they look with a great deal of anxiety as they see the lion of the tribe of Judah come forward and take the book out of the hand of him that sat upon the throne. And then, as the lamb takes the book that had been in the hands of the person who is on the throne," he said, "at that point, the whole of heaven seemed to break forth into shouts, for the four beasts and the four and twenty elders, they fall down before the lamb. And they sing a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

And he said, "Not only that, but he noticed as they looked that, not only did the four and twenty elders do what they did, but the voice of many angels round about the throne began to shout words of praise and thanksgiving and they were saying, 'Worthy is

the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.' And then the whole of the creation breaks forth in this marvelous word of praise and they say, 'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb for ever and ever.'"

And he said, "John and the Unitarian wandered a little more into heaven and they discovered there was another multitude which no man could number and what were they singing but, 'salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb.'"

And he said, "John took that Unitarian all through heaven until finally he came into the new heavens and the new earth, seeing the great visions of it, and he discovered that in the new heavens and the new earth there was no temple within it, for the lamb is the temple of it. Not only that, but there is not even any special light in the city of God, for the lamb is the light of the city of God. And finally, there is no more curse for the throne of God and the lamb shall be in it."

"And suddenly," Dr. Fuller said, "the Unitarian turned around and he said, 'Why, there is nobody here that doesn't worship the lamb jointly with God himself.'" And he said, "You know, that Unitarian went over to the side where he saw some palm branches and a harp lying there and he took the palm branch and he began to wave it around and play on his harp and say, 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain, worthy is the lamb by whom we are redeemed, worthy to the lamb who shed his blood for us.'" And with that he concluded his sermon.

That's the picture of a Unitarian in heaven. Well, Dr. Fuller, after he finished his sermon, he looked up and his Unitarian friend was making his way down toward the altar. And he shook his hand and he said, "Jesus Christ has conquered. Let me bow here and let me worship him as my Lord and my God." And, of course, that's true. There will be no one in heaven that does not worship the lamb of God equally with the Father, for it is one God who subsists in Father, Son, and Spirit; Father, lamb, and Spirit; Father, lamb, who shed his blood, and Spirit. It is the one God whom we worship. So our Lord Jesus

was trying to bring those scribes to the confession of the fact that the Lord was not only son of David, but also Son of God. I like that. I loved to have been there that night and I liked to have brought one or two of my Unitarian friends too.

Now, I began by saying that they had questioned his teaching, but now, having silenced those wicked little minions, he lets loose a storm of indignation. And I'm sure that our Lord's storm of indignation against the teachers, the scribes, is because he recognized that they have misled the people and have been saying that he was not teaching the word of God. I think I know something of what our Lord was talking about, but not in the degree. There are people who occasionally question what I have to say. That's alright; it is perfectly alright for you to question what I have to say, providing you are going to the Scriptures.

But if you are seeking to question what I say, just simply in an attempt to ensnare me or in an attempt to build yourself up by the things that you question and you are unwilling to come to me face to face and say, "I think you have gone a little bit astray at this point," that's another matter. That's another matter. I'm not claiming any authority other than the authority of a teacher taught by God to the extent that I am. And I would like for you to test everything that I say by the Scriptures, but I think I understand something of what our Lord was going through.

In his case, his teaching was always perfect, not fallible as mine. His was always authoritative for it was always in the Holy Spirit. And so these men who had been sniping at him, and criticizing him, and talking about his true doctrines as if they were false, finally the Holy Spirit brought him, at this climactic place in his ministry, to a direct criticism of them. And right at this point, having brought them to the question of who he is, son of David and Son of God, he launches out into this tremendous criticism of the Pharisees in chapter 23 of Matthew, a brief report of which is given us at the end of Mark chapter 12.

To paraphrase a great teacher's words about the things that our Lord Jesus said, to keep men in spiritual darkness not permitting the glorious light of the gospel to penetrate the dark corners of their lives, neither living in it ourselves or permitting other to do so, as in verse 13, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in." To enroll members in our denomination or sect arrogantly claiming that such membership is membership in the church of God and yet instructing them only in our darkness, as is done in verse 14, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore you shall receive the greater judgment." To overthrow the sense of proportion and spiritual things by reducing all things to the same level, the small and the great, the important and the more important, at the same time omitting ones duty to the later, as is done in verse 23 and 24, or is referred to in verse 23 and 24,

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel!"

To play at Christianity as if it were a game, to put appearance above the real thing, to reduce spiritual living to the tragedy of a hilarious farce as is referred to in verse 27 and 28,

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

To praise the past and practice the sins of the past while pretending to be horrified with them, to praise the reformers and to live as unreformed, to build memorials to the great spiritual leaders of the past indeed our word and at the same time denigrate and vilify the simple Bible believing and living Christian. And that is so frequently done, you know. We are the followers of John Calvin or we are the followers of Martin Luther, but you are not living like John Calvin and you are not living like Martin Luther. Or, we are the followers of Louis Sperry Chafer or we go to Believers Chapel where they teach and believe the Bible as the word of God, but you don't really pay any attention to the teaching of the word of God. These are the things, and the whole chapter is full of them, these are the things that cause a tempest of anger and wrath to sweep over the holy soul of Jesus and cause him to break forth in that terrible judgment, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" That is how terrible it is to teach truth and not live truth. That is how terrible it is to claim that you have spirituality and not really live it. That's how terrible it is to say, "I'm a Christian," and not really be a Christian.

If there is one thing that spurred the soul of our Lord Jesus, it was the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. There are no more terrible words in all of language than those in Matthew chapter 23. And I want to tell you, when I read those words, at times I have to get down on my knees and confess sin after sin after sin, because much of the same spirit with which those men oppose the Lord Jesus is the spirit that characterizes my life.

Now I want to close with one comment. There is an interesting connection between some verses here. You'll remember in the preceding encounter the Lord Jesus had been asked, "Which is the Great Commandment?" He had replied, "The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The juxtaposition of that particular statement, "The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul."

The juxtaposition of that statement with this, this last question that he offered, "If David calls him his Lord, how is he his son," is significant and compelling and attention getting. Because, you see, what our Lord is saying is, "The Lord our God is one Lord: And you shall worship the Lord with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and I am not only David's son, I am David's Lord." The Lord that we are to worship with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, is the Lord Jesus himself. There it is, right in this context which is before us. May God help us who say that we are believers in Jesus Christ, may we truly worship him. Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for this great section from the word of God. We acknowledge that he is not only David's son, he's David's Lord. And not only is he David's Lord, by the grace of God, he is our Lord. And may we worship him out of the willingness created by the Holy Spirit...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]