

## The Answer Question 11-27-05

Matthew 22:41-46 (NIV)

<sup>41</sup>While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, <sup>42</sup>"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied.

<sup>43</sup>He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, <sup>44</sup>"The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'" <sup>45</sup>If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" <sup>46</sup>No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

I just love the way God is always at work and on time when we are willing to see it. I was listening to a CD of a well-respected pastor, and he mentioned how helpful the web site, followtherabbi.com was. It is a site by Ray Vander Laan, whose teaching I have really enjoyed in his video tapes *Faith Lessons in the Land of Israel*. There happened to be some free audio downloads on that site, and, what do you know, they speak to this very chapter of Matthew that we have been studying. Coincidence? No! Godincidence!

It is so helpful in gaining insight to the text to understand the traditions in the first century. There were two types of rabbi in Jesus' day. There were the typical rabbi. They could only teach traditionally accepted teaching. They had memorized the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.

There were also those rabbi who had *s'mikah*, or in our translation "authority". These teachers could add new teaching. They had to know the entire Tenach (Old Testament) by memory. It is so rare that in one hundred years there were only 12. When they taught, most people were quite intimidated because, after all, the teacher with *s'mikah* knew the text he was teaching from word for word. He knew the cross-references word for word. We have the handicap of the various translations and versions, but they had it memorized in the original Hebrew, which many Jews could not even speak. I would be intimidated, wouldn't you?

Jesus was a teacher with *s'mikah*. In the end of Matthew 7 the people were amazed because Jesus taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. (Matthew 7:28-29) He quoted Scripture repeatedly. That is why He could say, "You have heard it said, but I say unto you..." (Matthew 5:21-22) We have seen a number of times that even though He was all God, He was all man as well. Jesus' insight and wisdom came from the Word of God and communion with the Holy Spirit. The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus learned from the Father. (John 15:15)

The question that started the day we have been studying was, "Where did you get your authority and who gave it to you?" (Matthew 21:23) They were asking why He taught as one having *s'mikah*. To get that authority, in addition to memorizing the entire Old Testament, you had to be appointed by two others with *s'mikah*. Jesus answered their question with a question. It is a very rabbinical way teaching.

**Commented [notes1]:** 28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,  
29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.  
Matthew 7:28-29 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'  
22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.  
Matthew 5:21-22 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.  
John 15:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 23 Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"  
Matthew 21:23 (NIV)

Vander Laan related a story of an amateur photographer that went into a camera shop in Israel. The owner of the shop had his own photography framed on the wall. He was a survivor of a Nazi prison camp. She started, "Can I ask you a question?" She did not realize that was a very Jewish thing to do. "Which is your favorite photo?" He responded, "Are you married?" Now, to our western mind, we would wonder if we should walk out the door, but to a Jewish mind you would realize he was leading up to the answer. She responded, "Yes, why do you ask?" Good thing she ended with a question or the conversation may have ended. "Do you have children?" he asked. "Yes, why?" She responded. Then he asked, "Which one do you like the best?" And she had the answer question.

Jesus asked, "Where did John get his *s'mikah*?" They couldn't answer because they knew the people believed John to be an anointed prophet. If they said he didn't, they would lose respect of the people. If they said he did, Jesus would ask why they didn't obey John's message. John, who had *s'mikah*, and God participated together in Jesus' baptism. It was there that the Spirit, who is the ultimate Teacher, came upon Jesus giving Him *s'mikah*. (John 1:32-34) In spite of the questions meant to trick Jesus, His answers demonstrated His authority.

Now the Teacher has a question for them. <sup>41</sup>While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, <sup>42</sup>"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. The Pharisees had gathered to grill Jesus with one last question. After His answer, He asked them a question that was meant to illuminate the minds of any that were seeking the truth. Last week we saw that the man that was chosen to ask the question was close to the kingdom of heaven. Perhaps there were others in the Pharisee's group that were touched by the powerful answers Jesus gave, so Jesus asked them to think about their perception of the Messiah. When we read Christ in the text, it is the same as Messiah of the Old Testament text. It means the anointed one. What a difference in the motivation of Jesus' questions versus the motives of the religious leaders! Jesus asked to enlighten them. The religious leaders asked that they might trap Him. (Matthew 22:15)

The Jewish people had many beliefs related to the coming Messiah. One of the clearest and most well known was that He would be from the line of David. God made it very clear through the prophets that a descendent of David would reign forever. (Isaiah 9:6-7) Careful genealogies were kept so that when He did come they could show His lineage and connect Him with the promises. When Jesus asked the question, no one hesitated to give the answer. The Messiah will be the son of David. (The Hebrew use of "son of" is equivalent to our expression "descended from".) The thing that they did not understand was that the Messiah would be all God as well as all man. They knew the man side. They did not suspect the God side. They should have seen it in the prophecies. (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

In typical rabbinic style Jesus goes on to teach with questions. <sup>43</sup>He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'?" First notice that Jesus said that David was speaking by the Spirit. This is the divine inspiration of Scriptures. Men spoke as they were moved by the Spirit of God. (2 Peter 1:21) The Pharisees were probably racking their brains to remember where David called the

**Commented [notes5]:** 32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.  
33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'  
34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."  
John 1:32-34 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 15 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words.  
Matthew 22:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.  
Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** 5 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.  
6 In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.  
Jeremiah 23:5-6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.  
2 Peter 1:21 (NIV)

Messiah LORD. That would have profound implications if David called the Messiah Lord. In Jewish tradition, the father is greater than the son is. They were thinking of a Messiah that would come close to David's anointing and authority, not supercede it. If David calls the Messiah Lord, the Messiah surpasses David's authority.

Before they could think of a text, Jesus shared one with them. In all Jesus' answers, we see His depth of insight into the Scriptures. The rabbi believed that Scripture was so rich and meaningful that you could turn each one like a jewel and see the light shine from the different facets. Jesus did this in ways we should admire and hope to emulate. Who else saw resurrection in the passage, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"? (Matthew 22:32) Who else understood the limitations of Sabbath Law in the story of David eating the shewbread? (Matthew 12:3-4) Who else could see that certain Scriptures were being fulfilled at that very moment, Scriptures like "the stone the builders rejected" (Matthew 21:42), or "out of the mouth of babes God has ordained praise"? (Matthew 21:16) Jesus saw the many rays of light that shine from each text.

Now He has another verse for them to ponder, the one in which David calls the Messiah Lord. It comes from Psalm 110. *For he says, "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'"* They all recognized the passage to be about the Messiah. To truly understand it we must understand the original language of the passage. We have two different words translated as the same English word "Lord". In Hebrew we have JHWH speaking to Adon. JHWH is the God of Israel. Adon means master or owner. So David wrote, Jehovah said to my (David's) master... The passage goes on to tell of the time between the ascension and the Second Coming. Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet. We understand it to be God the Father speaking to God the Son, Christ Jesus. (Psalm 110:1) Jesus will clearly say that this prophecy is about Him during the trial that was to take place a few days later. (Luke 22:69)

<sup>45</sup>*If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?"* If their understanding of the Messiah being merely mortal man was true, how could David call his son master? At that point the typical rabbinical conversation would continue with another question, but no one could think of a come back question. Jesus' knowledge and insight into the many faceted jewels of Scripture was so far beyond them that <sup>46</sup>*No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.* What do you say to the one who knows the text in ways you have never considered? They were in fear of speaking because His answers continued to reveal their ignorance. (Luke 20:26)

All that was left was for them to go away wondering at His insight into the Word. For those whose hearts were hardened it left one option. If you can't silence Him by debate, then you must physically silence Him by killing Him. (John 11:48) To those seeking the truth, they went home to wonder at His teaching. What did that mean? How can the Messiah be Son of David and David's master? It left a seed in their heart for the coming revelation in the resurrection. (Acts 6:7)

**Commented [notes10]:** 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."  
Matthew 22:32 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 3 He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?  
4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread--which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests."  
Matthew 12:3-4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** 42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"  
Matthew 21:42 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 16 "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?"  
Matthew 21:16 (NIV)

**Commented [notes14]:** 1 The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."  
Psalms 110:1 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."  
Luke 22:69 (NIV)

**Commented [notes16]:** 26 They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.  
Luke 20:26 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."  
John 11:48 (NIV)

**Commented [notes18]:** 7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.  
Acts 6:7 (NIV)

Jesus had put the Pharisees and Sadducees in their place. After that, He went on to pronounce prophetic woes upon the religious leaders of His day without holding back. We will be saving that study until after the holidays. In the weeks to come, we will be going over the Scriptural truths in the Chronicles of Narnia.

Let us return to Jesus' original question? *What do you think about the Christ?* Most of us are not from that rich Jewish heritage. We were not looking for a Messiah that would come and set our world right. And yet, we are all looking for a Messiah. We recognize that this world is an often crazy and mixed up place. Many of us wondered if there was a God and if He cared. We wonder if we will be held accountable for our actions. Guilt often grips our soul and we wonder what we can do with it. In that sense we are not different from those in Jesus' day who were longing for a Deliverer. (Luke 2:25)

Some of us searched for a Deliverer in our spouse, or in a person we admired. They inevitably fall short and so we keep hoping and looking for someone who is different. We watch for someone who has their life in control and can help or teach us to do the same. Some of the people we reach out to leave us even worse off than when we first clung to them. And then Jesus' question comes to us. *What do you think about the Christ?*

Each of us must decide. Last week we saw that He was teaching us in many different ways that He is offering to be our Messiah, our Deliverer. But what do we think about Him? Is He merely another man, enlightened but flawed like the rest of us? Can what He says really make a difference in my day-to-day life?

Then we come to the crux of the matter. *Whose son is He?* We are faced with the same question. As we approach the Christmas season, we are challenged again to answer that question. Is He the son of Joseph, of a Roman soldier or some other man? If that is the case, then He has nothing to offer us. He is too like us. But if God entered this world to show us the way to life, there is hope. (1 Timothy 1:15)

If God became a man what would His life be like? He would be holy, righteous, just, in command of nature, at peace, profound. He would be exactly like Jesus. Yes! God became a man. If God became a man to rescue us and lift us above this sin sick world, then my soul can sing. Then I can listen to His words and know that in them I have the answers I need. (Matthew 1:21)

He could have asked the Pharisees, "Who is my Father?" but they were not ready to receive it. Are you? Did God enter the world or are we without hope. Even today, God is sowing seeds of thought into our minds and asking us to not harden our hearts to the point of rejection like those who killed Him. (Hebrews 3:15) He is asking us to consider afresh what it means that He came into the world. We reside in that period of His story when His enemies are being made His footstool. Every skeptic will be put to shame. The prophecies are being fulfilled. The Messiah is coming again. Every knee will bow. (Philippians 2:10) So then, how should we live today?

**Commented [notes19]:** 25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.  
Luke 2:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst.  
1 Timothy 1:15 (NIV)

**Commented [notes21]:** 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."  
Matthew 1:21 (NIV)

**Commented [notes22]:** 15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." [Hebrews 3:15 (NIV)]

**Commented [notes23]:** 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
Philippians 2:10 (NIV)

Vander Laan told another story of being in a class taught by a Jewish instructor. This teacher was saying that westerners do not understand discipleship. We think more along the lines of a philosophical student. We want to know what Jesus knows. There is nothing wrong with that, but a disciple wants to be what his master is. He said that teacher would yell, "Christians declare their ignorance by claiming to be disciples of rabbi Jesus. If Christians were really disciples of Jesus they would read the Gospels every week! They are liars!" He said it with a great deal more passion than I just did. A disciple immerses himself into everything about their master. The master is their life as long as he lives. Then they go about to live like the master in every way but with their own personality. Are you just learning about the Master, just wanting to know what He knows, or are you wanting to be like the Master in how you think, desire, and act? (Luke 14:33)

What authority Jesus teaches with! No one ever saw authority like that! When you go out into the world, do you go knowing your rabbi was the only rabbi that got His *s'mikah* directly from God? Mark says the heavens were rent and God said, "This is my Son. I love Him! Hear Him!" (Mark 1:10-11) Do you go with that conviction that God Almighty commanded people to hear Jesus? People debate us about this philosophy and that, but we have the Master whose authority came from God. They are just talking about men. We are presenting the God man. The difference is night and day.

But what concerns me is that people who are merely students go out and proclaim Jesus. They tried to learn what He knew. They go to teach the facts and people see them and say, "Hey, you aren't anything like the One you are proclaiming." You see, they know the difference between a student and a disciple. I see many students. I rarely see disciples.

Are you His disciples, or are you just a student? Do you just know the facts or do you want to be like Him? Are you sitting at the feet of your Master? How much do you want to be like Him? Are you turning the jewels of Scripture and seeing the light shine from the many facets of each one as Jesus does? If you want to come after Him, you must take up your cross daily and follow. You must know He has the authority of heaven.

Listen how Matthew ends his gospel. <sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) All authority is His! With that authority He sends us out to make disciples. The One with all authority promises to be with us. What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?

**Commented [notes24]:** 33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.  
Luke 14:33 (NIV)

**Commented [notes25]:** 10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.  
11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."  
Mark 1:10-11 (NIV)