

Whose Son Is Christ

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[0 : 0 0] Now may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be found acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen. Let me tell you what a great delight it is to see you all here this morning and to have this opportunity to talk to you.

And the thing that I want to talk to you about is to continue what I've been doing ever since I arrived at St. John's almost a year ago or more than a year ago is to talk about the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

And if you wanted to follow very closely what I'm doing, you would be wise to turn in your pew Bible to page 22 in the New Testament section, which is the 22nd chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Now, it's not easy just to follow exactly where I am, so you're going to have to follow carefully. Looking, just to pick up the sequence of the story, you'd have to look at chapter 21, verse 12, and there you would see, this is on page 21, chapter 21, verse 12, you'd see this picture.

Jesus entered the temple of God and drove out all who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons, and it is written, he said, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers.

[1 : 4 2] Then if you turn over the page to chapter 21, you see him again in the temple. In verse 23, on the left-hand column, he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders came up to him as he was teaching and said, by what authority are you doing these things?

And who gave you this authority? Then if you will go over on to chapter 22 and look at verse 17 of chapter 22, tell us then what you think.

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Then if you follow on, you see at chapter 23 of verse 22, that the Sadducees came to question him this time, and they said, if a man dies, teacher, having no children, and his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother, and then they tell the story of the seven brothers, all of whom died and left their common wife childless, and they raise the impossible question, as it seems to them, in the resurrection, to which of the seven will she be wife?

And they chuckled quietly under their breath because they knew they had him trapped. Then the final question that I want you to look at, sorry, there's two more questions, and it runs in verse 36 of chapter 22.

And then the fifth of the questions is the question that Christ puts to them because they're gathered around.

[3 : 5 4] When he says to them in chapter 22 and verse 42, what do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he? Now, there you have then five questions.

Now, if you want, there is a very real sense in which you have to recognize this, that Jesus came in like a bolt of lightning to the temple and drove out the money changers, which aroused considerable opposition and certainly a good deal of attention.

And subsequently, over the course of one day, which we believe to be the Tuesday before the weekend of the crucifixion, and which is known as the day of question, he was publicly tried.

Tried pretty much the way the media tries people today. There is no court or anything. It was clearly their intention to trap him in his speech so that they would have evidence by which to do what they had already planned to do, which was to put him to death.

And so this was the day of questions. And if you remember the questions, here they are. By what authority do you teach?

[5 : 23] Should we pay taxes to Caesar? Is there a resurrection? What is the great commandment? And, finally, his question to them, what do you think of the Christ?

Now, those five questions were the sort of dialogue that went on between Christ and the people in the temple. And those are fundamental kinds of questions.

Now, we live in a world in which Christianity is a relatively small group among the many religions of the world.

And you can include with those religions the political ideology, such as Marxism. And you find that those are the questions that need to be asked of our whole world.

They're not questions for the private piety of Anglicans meeting in this lovely building in Shaughnessy on the Lord's Day.

[6 : 30] They are raging questions that run through the whole of our society and lie behind every headline and every television newscast.

Imagine standing up in front of a Russian tank regiment as it makes its way across the Afghanistan border and saying to them, by what authority?

Well, they're not going to sit down and discuss the question with you, but the question is there. By what authority do they do this?

Imagine going to a political meeting in Canada with a federal election scarcely a month away. and when the gentleman who is looking for your vote and asking you that you will be subject to him and allow him to levy taxes from you to order the course of your business life, to order the way that you run your private income and your account, and you say to him, should we pay tribute to Caesar or not?

And you're saying in effect to him, if you want us to be under authority to you, whose authority are you under? Your authority over me demands that you are under some authority.

[8 : 09] And what authority is that? Christ answered the question and said, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar, and there's a limit to those things.

You might remind the candidate and render to God the things that are God's. And that's less limited. And if you are prepared to acknowledge authority in your life and in the power that you will have to exercise, then we're prepared to say whose authority we will come under as citizens of this country.

So you see, it's a very relevant kind of question. And then you can, if you want, go to the crowd that's outside the American embassy in Iran, waiting for the next television camera, as I imagine, in order to raise their fists and scream at the rest of the world through the media.

And as they are there crying for the Shaw's blood, you can ask them about the resurrection. You see, the fact of the matter is that when Christ came and by his life of obedience and death, he became subject to the law and was crucified and on the third day rose again.

He established a reality for the whole of the human nation that the great thing about human life is not to ward off the encroachment of that dreadful which is death, but to overcome that dreadful and claim life which is stronger than death.

[10 : 10] And that's not just a quiet and tient question for Christians. That's a question for the whole world. And when they are raging in their anger and maybe their justified anger for the death of the Shaw, as though death is the final court of appeal, they're wrong.

They're wrong because there is a judgment which is beyond any of the circumstances of this life and the God of the Muslim and the God of the Jew and the God of the Christian says, vengeance is mine.

And the issue of life is something more than the perpetuation of this biological business that we're involved in, in the beating of our hearts and the breathing of our lungs.

There is life which is of a different order entirely. And that's what comes. And that our concern is not to be the servants of death, but to be the messengers of life.

And that our faith is that great subcontinent of India where many millions of people live who subscribe to the Hindu faith, the great question for them is, what is the great commandment?

[11 : 45] the faith? Because this has nothing to do in one sense with the particular creed of the Christian faith.

This has to do with what is our responsibility. You see, the difficulty is that the rest of the Western world might be concerned about their fellow man for reasons that you might well understand.

But that's not a consuming concern in that part of the world. That question remains largely on it. I don't point a finger of accusation against it because there is a fifth question and the fifth question is not put to Christ but is put by Christ and is put by him to the assembly that surround him and who have been asking these questions seeking to trip him up.

And the question that is put to them is what do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?

So that you see the implication it seems to me of that fifth question is that all the other questions ultimately cannot finally be answered definitively until you face the fifth question what do you think of the Christ?

[13 : 38] that's the basis on which you can answer the question by what authority do you teach? That's the basis on which you answer the question do we pay taxes to Caesar?

That's the authority by which you answer the question of the resurrection? That's the basis on which you answer the question what is the great commandment?

now when Jesus asked them that question he then took them to the scriptures in order to answer the question and if you look at the question you will find it at the bottom of page 23 where it says he said to them how is it then that David inspired by the spirit called him Lord saying the Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand till I put thy enemies under thy feet now the reason Jesus put that scripture in front of him was because though they denied his authority they considered the scriptures to be extremely authoritative and it is still true that if you want to know the authority of Jesus Christ you encounter it in the study of the scriptures and so he pointed them to the scriptures and asked them that question and they knew the quotation which comes from psalm 110 and they understood something of what it meant even though it might seem obscure the

Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand till I put thy enemies under thy feet well the implication is that David is referring to the Messiah and David is referring to the Messiah as the Lord and yet their understanding is that David's descendant is to be the Messiah you see the problem Jesus is trying to wrap them up in that he the great great great by thirteen generations grandfather of Jesus calls his descendants Lord now you see when he asks them the question they say who is the Messiah he is the son of

David so he comes back at them and says well then why does David call him Lord what he wanted them to see was that though the Messiah was the son of David he was infinitely greater than David and David knew that but they didn't and that their understanding of the Messiah was therefore an inadequate understanding of the Messiah an inadequate understanding of the person of Jesus Christ so that the place of Christians in the world today is that they look around and they see well what does the Jew say about Jesus Christ and what they what the Jew says is inadequate and what does the

[17 : 25] Muslim say about Jesus Christ and what the Muslim says is inadequate and what does the Marxist say about Jesus Christ and what the Marxist says is inadequate it's not fully comprehending who he is and who he claims to be and what does the great sort of subcontinent religion of Hinduism and Buddhism say about Jesus Christ and their answer is inadequate now the reason that that's a problem is because for most Christians the answer is inadequate too that we as Christians don't fully understand why David called his descendants

Lord we don't understand the glory and the authority of Jesus Christ in our world and when we don't do that then the result of that is that our answer to the question by what authority becomes an inadequate answer and men are confused for lack of authority not for lack of authority that's backed up by intercontinental ballistic missiles but by the lack of the authority of truth and when we ask the question do we pay taxes to thieves we don't understand the limitations of our political involvement in the kingdoms of this world in relation to our faith involvement in the kingdom of our God and his Christ and when we ask the question about what is the meaning of life our answer must be inadequate unless we understand the fact of the resurrection when we ask the question what is the great commandment our answer is inadequate unless we understand

Jesus Christ unless we see him in our neighbors and in our fellow so that we're not concerned here with just the petty circumstances of our private worship we're confronted by those questions which confront the whole of our world at a time of chaos and confusion now you see what happened was that those questions and look at how the chapter ends chapter 22 ends in a very dramatic way after those questions verse 46 Noah was able to answer him a word nor from that day did anyone dare to ask any more questions that was the trial of Jesus

Christ what happened as that week went into Thursday and Friday was that the great questions for mankind were reduced to matters of political expedience and it became necessary for one man to die for the nation as the high priest said but clearly at the end of chapter 22 Jesus Christ had vindicated his own name and his own ministry had established his authority in the world as well as in the world to come and had left men in the place where there was no more questions to ask so that you see it wasn't as this trial in the temple comes to an end it wasn't

Jesus who would come down but it is us in the fact that we have and live in adequate and to the great questions that confront us and confront our world and our answers will always be in editing if they are outside of some understanding of that question which Christ put to them and put to us and put to our world what do you think of the Christ he's done to to share here dispos he'sätz hisinch

[23 : 38] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.