

The Character of Jesus 74
Hard Questions
(Matthew 22:41 – 46, Mark 12:35 – 37, Luke 20:41 – 44)

- Characteristic: Context: The Big Picture
 - Following the Matthew account
 - (41) Jesus took the opportunity, since the Pharisees were already present, to ask them a question, much in the same way they had asked Him.
 - (42) References to the promise that the Messiah would be a descendant of David: 2 Samuel 7:12 – 17, Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 23:3 – 8.
 - (43 – 45) The citation is Psalm 110:1. In Jesus' day, this was commonly accepted as a psalm written by David. McGarvey reported that, after Jesus, many rabbis changed their minds and decided that the psalm was written by Abraham or Hezekiah. However, neither claim really solves the problem posed by Jesus, since Jesus was a descendant of both.
 - (46) In our time, this question is not so difficult because our culture does not emphasize dynastic authority. In that day, the first in a dynasty was accorded the greatest honor. Each subsequent king in that dynasty was subject to his ancestors, no matter how great may have been the achievements of that descendant. So, it would be improper to look forward to a descendant of the same dynasty whom the originator would be subservient. Each king in a dynasty acknowledged that he would have no power if it were not for that original ancestor.
 - Psalm 110 was popular, read by everyone. Yet, apparently everyone had read over the line "The Lord said to my Lord" without catching its importance.
 - Most importantly, Jesus read the Scriptures as a whole, so He was constantly asking such questions, "How does this fit with that?"
 - Because of the line in Psalm 110:4 about "a priest forever," the reader must deal with the Messiah being both human (descendant of David) and divine ("forever").
- Application: Context: Seeing the Big Picture
 - How can the faithful of today take this encounter to heart?
 - Look for apparent dichotomies and resolve them.
 - Authority (obedience) versus liberty
 - Law versus faith
 - Grace versus justice
 - Overcoming yet still sinning
 - Others?
 - Read the entire Bible as written (books, not chapters or verses).
 - Collect all the passages on one idea and make them all work together.
 - What would be the result of such a change of perspective?
 - Division over cherished doctrines being questioned.
 - Confusion among those with sparse knowledge.
 - Greater understanding of God's purpose.
 - Greater appreciation of God's mercy and forgiveness.