

# Rise Up And Build

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*"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18*

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## **“What Think Ye Of Christ?”**

(v. 41) *“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, (42) Saying, **What think ye of Christ?** Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. (V. 43) He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, (44) The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? (45) If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? (v. 46) And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions”* (Matt. 22:41-46).

In this chapter of Matthew is recorded conversations which took place between Jesus and the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, who were questioning him. The motive of the Pharisees and the Sadducees left much to be desired. For example, we note in Matthew 22:15 *“the Pharisees took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.”* In Matt. 22:24-28 the Sadducees posed a hypothetical question regarding seven brothers who successively (upon the death of the next in line brother) married their widowed sister-in-law. They asked, saying, *“therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her.”* They were not asking for information; to the contrary there were simply trying to ensnare Jesus, and they were completely unprepared for His reply, that *“in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven,”* (v.30), and that *“God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,”* (v. 32).

Once again the Pharisees entered the picture. Seeing that Jesus *“had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together, Then one of them, which was a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law”* (Matt. 22:36). Once again, they were not prepared for His answer, in which He said *“thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”* (Matt. 22:37-40).

At this point, Jesus became the **Questioner**, and the Pharisees became the questioned. He asked them, saying, *“**What think ye of Christ?** Whose son is he”* (Matt. 22:42). *“Christ”* in the New Testament is the *“Messiah”* of Old Testament prophecy, and the Jews were looking

forward to the coming of the Messiah, and they understood that the “*Christ*” or the Messiah would be “*the Son of David*,” that is, He would descend from David. Cf. 2 Sam. 7:12; Ps. 89:3,4; 110:1, etc. The New Testament begins by tracing the lineage of Jesus Christ, giving “*the genealogy of Jesus Christ the Son of David, the son of Abraham*” (Matt. 1:1), and then listing the ones in His lineage beginning with Abraham, through David, down to Mary, “*of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ*” (Matt. 1:16). So when Jesus asked “*what think ye of Christ? Whose son is he*,” they correctly replied saying, “*the son of David*,” Matt. 22:42. The Pharisees were certainly unprepared for the next question Jesus asked, it being “*How, then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?*” And Jesus first asked, saying “*How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?*” (Matt. 22:43-45)? At this point in their conversation, “*no man was able to answer him a word*” (Matt.22:46). Yes, Jesus was the master teacher. He put the religious leaders of the Jews to silence!

With the benefit of the New Testament, we have the answer to this question. **Jesus** was born of the lineage of David. He was both the “*son of man*” and “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matt. 16:13-16). As the “*son of man*” Jesus descended from David; as “*the Son of God*” He was born of a virgin, being “*conceived...of the Holy Spirit*” (Matt. 1:20). Jesus, the Word, who was “*with God*,” and Who “*was God*,” became “*flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:1,14). He was “*God...manifested in the flesh*” (I Tim. 3:16). He was divinity made incarnate in the flesh. From the standpoint of the flesh, from the standpoint of lineage, He was “*the Son of David*,” but being the “*Son of God*,” He preexisted David. Like God the Father, Jesus is the “*I AM*” (Ex. 3:14; John 8:58). This is why David prophetically could say “*The Lord (God the Father), said unto my Lord (Jesus Christ), Sit at My right hand, Till I make your enemies your foot stool*” (Ps. 110:1; cf. Acts 2:25-35). He was “*the Root and the Offspring of David*” (Rev. 22:16). Depending upon which direction one is looking, **Jesus** was David’s descendant, and David’s “Lord.”

The Pharisees could not answer Jesus’ question, “*what think ye of Christ? Whose son is he*.” From Old Testament prophecy, they knew the Christ, the Messiah was coming, but they did not recognize Him when He appeared! “*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not*” (John 1:11). In view of these facts, it was most appropriate that Jesus should ask the religious leaders of the Jews, “*What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?*” Regarding the Pharisees, as it related to Jesus Christ, their thinking was woefully incorrect. Instead of receiving and obeying Jesus, “*they cried out..., saying, Let him be crucified*” (Matt.27:22)!

What the Pharisees and the Sadducees **thought** of Jesus determined their response to Him. Pride, prejudice, and envy blinded their hearts regarding the true identity of the Son of God. He was the promised “*seed*” of Abraham (Gen.13:3; Gal. 3:16). He was the “*prophet*” like unto Moses whom God raised up (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:18-26). He was the virgin-born “*Immanuel*” of Isa. 7:15; Matt. 1:18-25). He was the promised “*Messiah*” of Dan. 9:25 (John 4:25-26). He was “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matt. 16:16).

In a real sense Jesus was the “hub of the Bible.” The Old Testament pointed to His coming. The New Testament begins with His birth, and it concludes with an announcement of His return. In both nouns and pronouns, it is said that Jesus is referred to nearly 7,000 times in the New Testament alone. The prophecies He fulfilled (Luke 24:44), and the miracles He performed proved conclusively that “*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*” (John 20:30-31). But the very ones who should have been first to receive Jesus, generally speaking, resisted Him the most. As it related to Jesus, **their thinking** was completely wrong!

However, the question, “**what think ye of Christ,**” is as important today as it was in the first century! What **you** “think” as it relates to the Person of Christ will largely determine **your response** to His teachings!

Sadly, the thinking of many moderns is as incorrect as that of many in the first century. Multitudes today view Jesus as a great teacher, even a great miracle worker, but they don’t really view Him as the Son of God, Whom they will face in the Judgment to come. Modernists of today think of Jesus as a great philosopher, but they deny His virgin birth, His miracles, His resurrection, etc. Premillennialists think of Jesus as a weakling; one Who came to set up an earthly kingdom, but was unable to accomplish His objective because of the rejection of the Jews.

A good barometer regarding what one really thinks of Christ can be determined by what he **thinks** with regards to His claims, His commands, and the church He built.

**What do you think** regarding the claims of Christ? This is important; in fact, Jesus said “if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24)

**What do you think** regarding the commands of Christ. There are multitudes who call Him “Lord, Lord,.” while refusing to carry out His commands (Luke 6:46). Then, too, countless ones obey some of Jesus’ commands, but reject other commands. They agree that one must believe, but deny that one must be baptized, even though the same Jesus commanded both (Mark 16:15-16). And many professed Christians acknowledge that saints are commanded to assemble, but willfully forsake the assemblies (Heb. 10:26), etc. We ask, is the **thinking** of such people really such as it ought to be?

**What do you think** regarding the church Jesus built. He built the church (Matt. 16:18). He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). To it, the saved are added (Acts 2:47), and in it one is reconciled unto God (Eph. 2:16). But multitudes the world over (including countless ones who claim to believe the Bible!) ridicule the idea that one must be a member of Christ’s church in order to be saved!

**Conclusion:** We could continue, but we are out of space. But before we close, let me ask you, the reader, based upon **your** response to the claims of Christ, the commands of Christ, and your attitude toward membership in His church, “**what think ye of Christ?**” —B. Witherington

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