

Why Do You Call Him Lord?

One of Jesus' most interesting encounters deals with His concern over why people would be calling Him Lord. On the surface, it would seem only natural, for He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! We are even reminded that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. So why would Jesus question peoples affirmation and apparent recognition of such?

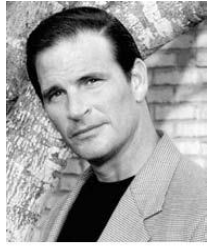
The answer is actually very simple, and Jesus in the passage certainly alludes to the heart of the issue. It all has to do with what the word *Lord* actually means. A "*Lord*" or *kurios*, was a master, or slave owner, in the common vernacular of the day. The *Lord* was the boss of the house! He was the one to whom the slaves had actually been legally indentured. Later, in time in the Roman Empirical Cult, the term *Lord* carried a much greater degree of significance. Roman emperors used the term to carry the idea that they were descendants of the gods, and should be worshipped and venerated as such. In the Roman aristocracy, the idea of being *Lord* meant one was worthy of worship. No matter how the term *Lord* was used in the ancient world, it always carried with it several recognized connotations. The first was authority. The *Lord* stood above all others in dignity, power, and authority. His word was law, and there was no one who possessed the right to challenge him. The second was obedience. Whatever the master said was to be obeyed. This was not from fear, but rather a fact of law. Indentured slaves had in effect given up his or her personal right to govern themselves. In exchange for food, shelter, clothing, and protection, they yielded themselves to the will of their master. It is, of course, against this backdrop of ancient

understanding that Jesus questions why people are calling Him Lord.

Now the issue is not whether Jesus was truly Lord, the question was why people were calling Him Lord and then not giving Him the honor and respect the title demanded. Thus, Jesus said, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not the things I ask?" For Jesus the issue was why the people would so readily address Him by such a title, without taking seriously what the title implied. We should all be asking ourselves that same question today. Why do you call Him Lord? Is it because the Bible says He is, or because He holds the place of absolute authority in your life and you have submitted yourself to Him as such. If Christ's authority does not rule over your life, you can be assured whatever He is; He is not your Lord! Jesus unfortunately is many things to many people, the least of which is Lord. The truth Jesus was implying is that you cannot call Him Lord and not do the things He asks. That being the standard by which we may address Him as such, who is your Lord really?

One day, the whole of creation will bow to recognize, that although many took the authority that was rightfully His (for a time) from Him, still all of creation has always been subject to Him, whether they realized it or not. One day, creation will in unison, testify, He was, and is, and always will be Lord of all! So I will ask you again, why do you call Him Lord? My admonition to all of humankind is, bow now, or bow later!

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