

The Biblical Unitarian Podcast - by Dustin Smith, PhD

Episode 384—"Does Calling Jesus 'Lord, Lord' Imply Divinity?"

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Introduction

So the attempts at finding new and clever ways to argue that Jesus claimed to be God. Jesus never said he was God, he never said I am Yahweh, he never said I am the creator of heaven and earth.

Now there is a relatively new argument making the rounds on the internet, especially TikTok. This argument points to four places in the NT, only in Matthew and Luke, where Jesus said "Lord Lord." The argument is that this phrase, the double vocative "O Lord" is a direct reference to Adonai Yahweh. But not in the Hebrew text. In a few places, only in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, Adonai Yahweh is rendered as Lord Lord, the double vocative. Even though there is no vocative in Hebrew, there are roughly 15 places in the Septuagint where Yahweh is referred to as Lord Lord. So the argument is that Jesus is claiming to be Adonai Yahweh by referring to himself as Lord Lord.

It's complex. It's convoluted. But it's making the rounds, so I gotta put a stop to this nonsense.

Modalism. Or collapsing God and Jesus into a single person.

In this week's episode, we will examine the double use of the vocative Lord Lord to see what it did mean on the lips of Jesus, and what it couldn't have meant.

Did Matthew and Luke identify Jesus as Yahweh?

1. Old Testament Passages Rendered as “Lord, Lord” in the Septuagint

- a. 'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours? (Deut 3:24)
 - i. “You (atah) have begun”
 - ii. “To show the servant of you (abud’kah)”
 - iii. “The greatness of you (gadul’kah)”
 - iv. “And the strong hand of you (yad’kah)”
- b. "Let Your name be established and magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and the house of David Your servant is established before You.' (1 Chron 17:24)
 - i. “Let the name of you (shim’kah) be established”
 - ii. “The house of David, the servant of you (abud’kah)”
 - iii. “Be established before you (l’faney’kah)”
- c. But You, O GOD, the Lord, deal kindly with me for Your name's sake; Because Your lovingkindness is good, deliver me (Ps 109:21)
 - i. “But you (atah) Yahweh Adonai”
 - ii. “For the sake of the name of you (shumey’kah)”
 - iii. “Because of the steadfast love of you (chas’d’kah)”

2. The Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ

- a. 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet" ' (Matt 22:44)
- b. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)
- c. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (Luke 2:26)

3. A Close Look at the “Lord, Lord” Passages

- a. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say

to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' (Matt 7:21-22)

- i. Urgency, sincerity, earnestness
- ii. Claim to obedience, a claim to lordship
- b. "Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. (Matt 25:11-13)
 - i. Parable of the 10 virgins, these 5 did not have their lamps lit, didn't prepare with enough oil for the return of the messianic king
- c. "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. "But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great." (Luke 6:46-49)

Thanks for listening to this week's episode!

Join us next week as we explore the christology and beliefs of Ignatius.

Please look forward to our next episode.

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