

# Who Is The Christ?

From Mark 8, where Peter confesses Him as the Messiah, Jesus leads His disciples to Jerusalem, to the cross. He teaches, He heals many – showing that the bonds of sickness and death dissolve at His touch. In Jericho, He is recognized by a blind man as the Son of David. Blind Bartimaeus, by God's grace, can see what many cannot.

Now we are in the middle of the Lord's Passion Week. This passage finds Jesus still in the Temple teaching the Word of God. The scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees are still looking for a way to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people and the Roman government.

Over the past few weeks, we have been considering the questions these men brought to Jesus. Their questions were designed to trap Jesus and cause Him to lose His influence with the people. Regardless of the nature of their questions, Jesus handled them all well. He left His enemies without any ammunition that they could use against Him.

Now the Lord turns the tables on His attackers. When He sees them beginning to retreat, Jesus goes on the offensive. He asks them a question. We want to consider the question the Lord asked the scribes and Pharisees. This question gets to the heart of what they believe about the identity of Jesus Christ. How they answer this question will determine where they will spend eternity. And it does for us as well.

Follow along in your Bibles as I read Mark 12:35-37:

**35 Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?"**

**36 For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." '**

**37 Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?" And the common people heard Him gladly.**

## I. The Question

Jesus asked them, **"How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?"** The question is really a loaded question because what He means by that is this, how is it that the scribes say that the Christ is only the Son of David? How is it that they say He is the son of David and nothing more?

The Jews believed that the Messiah, or the Christ, would be a physical descendant of King David. They believed that the Christ would be a great military leader who would deliver Israel from those who oppressed them. They believed that the Christ would be a great king. They believed the Christ would be a man, a gifted man, a great leader, a military man, a man of might, influence, and power. And that was all to be true but that wasn't the complete answer. They were right in all they believed, but their belief did not go far enough!

Just for the record today, let me say that Messiah was to be the Son of David. You can read it all over the Old Testament. Places like 2 Samuel 7:8-16 where the Lord says that there will come a great Son of David, not Solomon but a far-greater son of David who will have an everlasting Kingdom and that is the promise of the Messiah to be a Son of David. Isaiah 9:7 says He will sit "**upon the throne of David and over His kingdom.**" Jeremiah 23:5 says, "**Behold, the days are coming,**" says the Lord, "**That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.**"

And we know Jesus fulfilled those prophecies and more. According to the genealogies on both Matthew and Luke, Jesus was a direct descendant of David and was in line to be the next king of Israel. On a dozen occasions Jesus was called "***the Son of David***" by the common man. Jesus was the "***Son of David***".

By the way, one of the easiest ways to discredit Jesus as the Messiah would have been to prove that Jesus was not a descendent of David. If they could have done that, Jesus' claims to be the Christ would have been finished. But they could not. All the genealogical records of the Jews were kept in the temple. And so the religious leaders and the Sanhedrin would be the caretakers of those records. You can be sure those records were examined very carefully. I'm sure they examined the lineage of Joseph and Mary and they found that He indeed was a son of David. As I said, if they could have disproven that, it would have ended all claims that Jesus had to be the Messiah.

So their answer is correct in the sense that He is the Son of David, but it is inadequate. It comes short of the full picture. As a son of David, Jesus was fully human. He was really a man.

*He had a human mother* – Luke 1:31; Gal. 4:4

*He had a human body, soul, and spirit* – Matt. 26:12; 38; Luke 23:46

*He looked like a man* - John 4:9; John 8:57; John 20:15

*He possessed flesh and blood* – Heb. 2:14

*He grew* – Luke 2:52

*He asked questions* – Luke 2:46

*He increased in wisdom* – Luke 2:52

*He prayed* – Mark 1:35; Luke 11:1

*He was tempted* – Matt. 4:1; Heb. 2:18; Heb. 4:15

*He learned obedience* – Heb. 5:8

*He hungered* – Matt. 4:2; Matt. 21:18

*He thirsted* – John 4:7; John 19:28

*He was weary* – John 4:6

*He slept* – Matt. 8:24; Mark 10:21

*He had compassion* – Matt. 9:36

*He was angered and grieved* – Mark 3:5

*He wept* – John 11:35; Luke 19:41

*He experienced joy* – Luke 10:21; Heb. 12:2

*He was troubled* – John 11:33; John 12:27; John 13:21; Mark 14:33-34

*He sweat drops as of blood* – Luke 22:44

*He suffered* – 1 Pet. 4:1

*He bled* – John 19:34

*He died* – Matt. 27:50; 1 Cor. 15:3

*He was buried* – Matt. 27:59-60

But when Jesus uses the word “**Christ**”, He is implying that the Messiah would be more than a man. The Jews were looking for a human being, Jesus is about to show them that the Messiah will be human, but He will also be God. They were not ready for this truth!

So, Jesus confronts them about their beliefs concerning the nature and identity of the Messiah.

Many people in our world are like the scribes and the Pharisees. They enjoy hearing some of the Bible stories about Jesus. They love the image of the baby in His manger; the man who fed the multitudes, healed the sick, taught the people, raised the dead and walked on water. Some even like the story of the cross and the resurrection.

But, many people in our culture cannot grasp the truth that Jesus Christ is more than a baby in a manger, or a man who got Himself crucified on a cross. They cannot seem to grasp the truth that He is God in human flesh! They cannot get their minds around the truth that He is the only way to God; that He is the only hope of salvation. People will go so far, but they often will not go far enough!

Not far enough is a dangerous place to be when it comes to your relationship with Jesus Christ. Like that scribe who had just asked the question of the greatest commandment, some people are “**not far from the kingdom of God.**” “**Not far**” may still be a long way off! “**Not far**” still means you are lost. “**Not far**” is not where you need to stay. You need to come to Jesus Christ and call on Him for salvation. He is the only way to God, John 14:6. He is the only hope of salvation, Acts 4:12. He is the only door that leads to live eternal, John 10:9. With Him, you are saved; without Him, you are lost forever, 1 John 5:12.

## **II. The Exposition**

As Jesus confronts these men He takes them to the Word of God. Jesus is the master expositor of scripture. He asks them about Psalm 110:1, “**The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool'.**” That verse was acknowledged by the Jews to be a reference to the coming Messiah. Jesus points out that a careful reading of that verse reveals the truth that the Messiah will be more than a man.

The first “**Lord**”, in Psalm 110:1, is the Hebrew word “**Yahweh**”. The second “**Lord**” in that verse is the Hebrew word “**Adonai**”. The idea in that verse is this, “**the Lord (Yahweh) said to my (David’s) Lord (Adonai)...**” In other words, David addresses the Messiah as his Lord! The implication is clear. The Messiah is to be a man, but He is to more than a man. He is to be God as well.

Jesus is very clearly declaring the deity of the Messiah. When David, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, “**Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool**”, he was placing the Messiah in a position of authority that was co-equal with Almighty God. The word “**sit**” in that verse speaks of a continuous sitting. God will elevate the Messiah to a place of equal exaltation with Himself, Phil. 2:9-11. Messiah must be God because He will be in a position of absolute equality with God in His honor, His power and His glory.

The clear implication of this can be seen in what Jesus said next. “**Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?**” In that society a father would never call his son Lord! A father never rendered that kind of honor to a child. Yet, David looks at this one who is to be his son and David calls Him Lord. This is a declaration that the Messiah is to be more than a man. He is to be a God-man!

When the Jews heard this, they were dumbfounded. They had no answer. This unlearned carpenter had put them to shame in the very area where they were supposed to be the experts. Jesus had interpreted the Scriptures in an accurate, clear way that they could not refute.

What these Jews did not want to see, much less acknowledge, was that Jesus was clearly claiming to be the Messiah. In fact, He had proven His identity time and again.

His triumphal entry into Jerusalem proved His identity – Mark 11:1-11. Jesus had arrived on the very day predicted by the prophet Daniel, Dan. 9:24-27. He arrived in the precise way that the Prophet Zechariah said the Messiah would come, Zech. 9:9. This should have been proof enough.

His words proved His identity – Everyone who heard Him speak was awestruck by what they heard. John 7:26, “*Never man spake like this.*” Matt. 7:29, “*For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*” Luke 4:22, “*And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?*”

His works proved His identity – Jesus had proven that He was the Messiah on many occasions. He met and exceeded every Old Testament prophecy that predicted what the Messiah would do when He came. (Ill. Isa. 29:18-19; Isa. 35:3-6; Isa. 61:1-2.) Jesus even exceeded the prophecies by raising the dead.

While Jesus was a man, He was also God! When Jesus came into this world, He was God come down in human flesh. That is the clear teaching of the Word of God, John 1:1; 14; Phil. 2:5-8. The evidence from His life proves this too.

The New Testament overflows with evidences of the fact that Jesus was God. He shared with God the mutual attributes of omnipotence. He proved His power over disease, over demons, over Satan, over men, over nature, over sin, over the Sabbath, over the temple, and over death. He commanded the elements, provided food, and

even delegated such powers to His disciples. He was the healer of the sick, the raiser of the dead, the forgiver of sin and the judge of all. He showed the attribute of omniscience, He knew everything, even what was going on in the minds of men. He was holy, true, wise, sovereign, loving, eternal, glorious. He possessed all the attributes of God He put them all on display. He accepted worship from angels, from the wise men, from a leper, from the maniac of Gadara, from the man born blind, from the women at the tomb, and from His disciples. In fact, He demanded worship. He was to be sought in prayer, as the source of answered prayer and the one who opened the resources of God to pour out blessing on His people. Everything He said was to be believed as the truth of God. And He was to be believed on for salvation.

He took the titles of God...Rock, Stone, Savior, Redeemer, Holy One, Lord of Hosts, King, First and Last, Light, Law-giver, all Old Testament titles for God that Jesus attributed to Himself. The Lord Jesus proved Who He was. He fulfilled prophecy. He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. He was clearly Who He claimed to be. Yet, the Jews refused to accept Him. They refused to acknowledge Him as their Messiah, John 1:11, Luke 19:14; John 19:15.

### III. The Application

We are told in verse 37 that “***the common people heard Him gladly.***” I think what they were most glad about was the fact that He put the scribes and the Pharisees in their place. These religious leaders were pompous and arrogant, but Jesus shut them down and He shut them up. The common people loved that, but many didn't truly love Jesus!

Before the week was over many people would follow in the steps of their leaders and they would also reject Him as their Messiah, Mark 15:6-15.

Israel had all the evidence they needed to believe on Jesus. They had all the Old Testament prophecies that He had fulfilled to the letter. They had the proof in the Temple records that Jesus was a descendant of King David. They had the evidence of changed lives all around them. There were people who had been sick that were well. There were blind people who could see. There were deaf people who could hear. There were demoniacs who had been delivered. And, most amazing of all, there were a few people walking around that used to be dead!

Consider this; we have far more evidence than they had. We have a completed Bible. We can read the Old and the New Testaments and we can see where prophecies were both made and fulfilled. We can look around us and we can see the lives that have been changed by the amazing grace of God. We have every reason to believe that He is Who He claims to be.

In his classic book *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis takes us to the heart of our faith when he addresses the identity of Jesus Christ and the response we all must give. The trilemma of Lord, Liar or Lunatic has become famous and right so.

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who

says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” (pgs. 55-56).

It is so clear isn't it! Jesus is both David's Son and David's Savior. Jesus is both David's Son and God's Son. Jesus is both human and divine. Jesus is both man and God.

So now you know who He is. There is no evading the issue. There is no sitting on the fence. You must decide for Him or against Him.

This is the question you face today. What have you done with Jesus? What you do with Jesus in this life will determine what Jesus does with you in the afterlife. If you have never trusted Jesus for salvation, I invite you to come today so you can be saved.

One day you will meet the Messiah. One day you will stand before Him. You will see Him in all of His glory, you will know He and confess Jesus is Lord. When that day comes, will He be your Savior, or will He be your Judge? It will all depend on what you do with Him here. If you reject Him, you will face Him as your Judge. If you receive Him, you will face Him as your Savior.