

**Who is the Messiah?
Mark 12:35-37
October 21, 2018**

Several OT passages prophesy that a deliverer or Messiah would come (Daniel 9:25-27; Isaiah 9:6-7; Micah 5:2). Chances are good that the Messiah is different from what we want and may even be offensive to us. Jesus' encounter with the religious leaders of his day in Mark 12:35-37 warns us of some dangers in our thinking about who the Messiah is.

The Teachers of the Law said the Messiah was the son of David (v. 35). That much was true (Matthew 1:1; Romans 1:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:8) but not their interpretation of it. They thought that being "son of" David meant the Messiah would be a militant king who would defeat their enemies, especially, Rome. They sought to draw him into their cause, instead of allowing him to draw them into his cause. Warning #1: people tend to make Messiah what they personally want him to be.

So Jesus dumfounds the Jewish leaders by asking them a question they couldn't answer (Mark 12:35-37). A thousand years earlier David himself had referred to the Messiah as his Lord (Psalm 110:1). In Jewish thought, sons could call their fathers "lord" or master, but fathers would never describe their sons that way. In addition, if the Messiah was already alive during David's time, how could the Jews say he would one day descend from David? This conundrum put the Teachers in their place. The crowd enjoyed it, although they probably didn't understand all Jesus was saying. Warning #2: even if we know something about Messiah, we don't know everything.

There's more to this account, though, than just Jesus putting the Teachers of the Law in their place. Since Jesus applied Psalm 110 to himself, we can learn more about who the Messiah is from it:

1) He is Lord or Master (of all)(Philippians 2:9-11).

2) He is seated at God's right hand (Mark 14:62; 16:19). The pathway that led there included his death, his resurrection and his ascension. The right hand of a king is a place of honor and power (1 Kings 2:19; Mark 10:37), so Jesus is said to be *exalted* there (Acts 2:33; 5:31). It is a place of superiority (Hebrews 1:1-4), far above all other powers (Ephesians 1:20-23; 1 Peter 3:22). His work now is to intercede for us (Romans 8:34), reign over God's kingdom and wage spiritual warfare (1 Corinthians 15:25).

3) He has enemies. Some that are specifically mentioned include Satan (Luke 10:18; 1 Timothy 5:14; 1 Peter 5:8), death (1 Corinthians 15:26), people who are not reconciled to him (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21), false teachers (Philippians 3:18), and those who are friends with the world (James 4:4).

4) His enemies are being put under his feet, that is, subjugated (cf. Joshua 10:16-24). Ultimately, all God's enemies will be either won over (reconciled) or subdued and destroyed (Luke 19:27; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Hebrews 10:13, 27). People who follow Christ seek to reconcile Christ's enemies through love (Matthew 5:43-44; Luke 6:27, 35; Romans 12:20) but do not participate in their destruction lest they themselves be overcome by evil in the process. Instead, they leave that to God (Romans 12:19-21).

Warning #3: There's more to Messiah than we think too, and it may not all make us feel good.

Warning #4: It is possible for us to be enemies of Christ, which ought to terrify us.

Warning #5: It is right to stand in awe of the Lord, or better, kneel or bow in awe of him (Philippians 2:9-11).