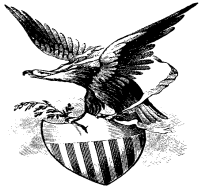


Light Brings Salt

Volume 4, Issue 1

January 1, 2006



Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God



CHRIST on "Christ:" "Whose Son is He?"

By Ron Merryman

Jesus posed a serious question to the Pharisees shortly before they had Him crucified. Matthew records it thusly:

"What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?"

In Mt. 22:42, Christ Himself was questioning religious leaders who were proud of their knowledge of the Old Testament. His question was not personal; it was doctrinal, theological. He was probing. He was stimulating thought processes about the uniqueness of the promised Messiah in the Old Testament.

The essence of His logic runs like this, "Your sacred scriptures are replete with promises of a coming Messiah (the Christ). You claim to be authorities on this subject. Tell me about the lineage, the genealogy of the Christ. Whose Son is He?" The importance of this question lies in His response to their answer.

Their Answer

They said unto Him, "**The Son of David**" (Mt. 22:42b). Their answer is correct, but only partially correct. Like, if in reply to the question, "Who discovered America?" one answered, "Columbus," he would be only partially correct. Vikings and Indians were here long before Columbus.

The Messiah indeed had to be in the lineage of ancestor David. God so

promised in a covenant he made with David; "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever... And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam. 7:12,13,16).

From David's time on, this passage was understood as Messianic. A Messiah from the line of David would rule the kingdom in perpetuity. Jews in Jesus' day fully expected this.

Jehovah, through Jeremiah the Prophet, reaffirmed the promise four hundred years after David was dead: "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. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called." THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:5-6).

The Pharisees well knew that these promises related directly to God's promised Messiah. Messiah, indeed, would be the Son of David. But He would be more. Note Jesus' follow-up question.

Jesus' Response to Their Answer: A Final Question

He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: the

LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool? ' If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" (Mt.22:43-45).

Our Lord referred them once again to their very own sacred scriptures. Jesus said that David in Psalm 110:1 calls Messiah, the Anointed One, "**Lord!**" It is He Who will reign from Jerusalem and judge the nations as Psalm 110 goes on to explain. And Jesus said David did this "**in the Spirit**", that is, while writing Psalm 110 under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit! If Messiah is David's Lord, he is obviously much more than David's son.

What is Jesus Purpose Here?

This final question posed by Jesus to the Pharisees is loaded. First: Who Jesus claimed to be is verifiable by the Old Testament. Second: it is evident that Jesus took literally the messianic promises therein. Messiah would have to be David's son humanly. But Messiah would also be David's Lord, far more than simply human, one worthy of worship, Lord. He indeed would be the unique, eternal Son of God. Third: Jesus understood prophesy as inspired by the Holy Spirit, hence totally reliable. Fourth: Jesus understood that Messiah will one day literally judge and reign over the nations.

Though this discourse (Mt. 22:41-46) was between the Pharisees and Jesus, it is recorded for others, including us. The context indicates that the Pharisees were determined to terminate Jesus. Fully understanding this, Jesus pronounces eight woes on them in the very next paragraphs of Matthew.

They would not accept that he was indeed the Son of God. In fact, Jesus' claim to so be precipitated their demand for His crucifixion. Note the dialogue as Jesus stood in judgment before the Sanhedrin: *And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God. Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" (Mt.26: 63).* If you miss anything

in reading this article, do not miss this: THE HIGH PRIEST KNEW THAT MESSIAH WOULD INDEED BE THE UNIQUE SON OF GOD! *Jesus said to him, "It is as you said... " or, in the vernacular of our day, "You said it!"*

That the High Priest understood Jesus' claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God, is clear by his response: *"Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death '" (Mt. 26:65-67).*

Jesus' Claim to be "The Son of God"

When individuals, religious cults like the Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and Christian Science say that Jesus never claimed to be Deity, they cast doubt on their ability to read. THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE SANHEDRIN DID INDEED UNDERSTAND HIS CLAIM. Within hours, they would have Him crucified for such arrogance. Why? Because they clearly understood that Messiah would be the Son of God and from their point of view, this Jesus of Nazareth was a phony.

How did the High Priest know that when Messiah came, He would be the Son of God?

"The Son" in Psalm 2

The general vision of Psalm 2 is Messiah reigning. But the Psalm begins with nations and people groups in rebellion against God and His Anointed One (*Messiah* in Hebrew, *Christ* in Greek). Note the wording: *Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed (Messiah, main) saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us" (Psalm 2:1-3).*

The early church saw this as partially fulfilled in the crucifixion (Acts 4:24-26). Its final fulfillment waits the time of the Antichrist. Old Testament Jews and the Chief Priest of Jesus' day understood Psalm 2 to be Messianic.

Psalm 2 makes an abrupt shift in verse 6: despite the rebellion of the masses against Jehovah and His Anointed One, we read, *"Yet I (Jehovah) have set My King On My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree. The LORD has said to Me, 'You are **My Son**, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance and the ends of the earth for Your possession (Psalm 2:6-8).*

God the Father here addresses God the Son: "YOU ARE MY SON." You stand in relation to me eternally as a Son to a Father: this is your absolute *status quo* essence. "This day have I begotten You" is a reference to the incarnation of the eternal Son in the person of Jesus (and is so used in each of its quotes in the New Testament, Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5, 13).

Messiah as God's Son is again in focus in the rest of Psalm 2: *Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss **the Son**, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him (2: 10-12).*

The prophecy of Isaiah 9:6-7 also alerted the High Priest and others that Messiah would be the unique Son of God. Note also that it foretells His reign over the nations:

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a **Son** is given. And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the*

throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

A child is born, but a SON is given! Indeed, the Messiah promised in the Old Testament is the Son of God. And Jesus of Nazareth, virgin born of Mary in the lineage of David is the SON given!

Summary and Conclusion

Hence Paul will write:

*Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning **His Son Jesus Christ** our Lord, who was **born of the seed of David** according to the flesh ... and declared to be **the Son of God** with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1: 1-4).*

And John will write:

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that **Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God (1 John 4:14-15).**

The High Priest that condemned Jesus was right: The Messiah promised in the Old Testament would be the Son of God. He was wrong, however, dead wrong in not recognizing Jesus of Nazareth as the long awaited Messiah of Israel and only Savior of the world!

Were Jesus to pose the question to you, "What think you about the Christ? Whose Son is He", how would you respond?