

MARK — Whose Son Is the Messiah?

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The question we're wrestling with today is: "How do you handle the slow unfolding plans of God **when they don't make sense**? What's God doing in the strange in-between?"

For years, the Pharisees built up an idea of who the Messiah was going to be. This was built from a portrait painted about who Jesus was in the Torah (Genesis - Deuteronomy), the Prophets (Joshua - Malachi), and the Writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Daniel, and the rest).

And when Jesus showed up, this is not going the way that they expected at all.

Mark 12:35-37

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?

David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

" 'The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet." ' "

David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

The large crowd listened to him with delight.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 12:35-37.

Jesus here is pulling on the tradition from 2 Sam 7:14-15 and Psalm 2 (cf. 2 Samuel. 7:8–16; Psalm. 89:3–4; Isaiah. 9:2–7; 11:1–9; Jeremiah. 23:5–6; 30:9; 33:15–17, 22; Ezekiel. 34:23–24; 37:24; Hosea 3:5; Amos 9:11).

This is rather cryptic, so let's break the scripture down:

The Lord (Heb: YHWH, God the Father), said to my [David's] Lord (Heb Adonai; the Messiah): Sit at my [YHWH's] right hand (place of highest honor and authority) until I [YHWH] put your (Messiah's) enemies under your (Messiah's) feet.

Or paraphrased this way: YHWH said to David's Messiah, "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet."

Jesus was affirming that through Holy Spirit's prophetic inspiration, David prophesied about the Messiah. Jesus isn't questioning the original assumption but adding nuance to it, something that seriously needs to be considered.



That is: not only is the Messiah a descendant of David (human), but it is *equally true* that the Messiah is *David's Lord (divine)*. Said in another way, the Messiah is human (David's son), and divine (David's Lord) at the same time.

Pointing To the King

After all of the series of tests that the religious leaders posed Jesus, their original question was still unanswered: Who are you and by whose authority do you do these things?

Jesus' rhetorical question pointed His listeners to the only valid answer to the question they had been asking: "who do you think you are?"

In the slow unfolding times of God, there are times when Jesus walks in and flips over tables and asserts his royal authority to run your life in a different way. He will approach us like that because if you are a Christian, you have knelt down and sworn your allegiance to King Jesus.

And the Pharisees didn't know who he was and challenged his authority because they didn't know who he was. They didn't reason that David's Son and Lord would be standing before them in the temple.

In the slow unfolding plans of God, things don't go my way because I am not king and Jesus is.

How Do We Harmonize Jesus' Slow Plans With Challenges?

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ro 8:28–35.

This verse is where Bonhoefer got his phrase, 'God is pro me.' Working through the challenges in God's plan requires us to slow down, step back, and gain his perspective over this reality. If you are trapped in a material reality where this is all there is, there is little redemption to the challenges and unmet expectations in this life.



But from God's perspective, he offers an alternate reality, one where we're invited to see, in every meandering or challenging moment to see how God is working your challenges, your suffering, your meaningless situations into a crucible that will mold you into his image. And none of those crucibles will separate you from God's love.

Meditate on what that means to be the image of God, because I'm sure that for some Christians, being the image of God doesn't top your list of things to look forward to in the midst of a trial, but King Jesus in his wisdom claims this is good. And now you get to sit before the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and decide whether what he says really is good or not.

Will you lean in to Jesus' words and challenge or will you turn back?

Additional Reading

Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.'

“ ‘The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’ ”

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 2 Sam 7:8–16.

You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,
‘I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all generations.’ ”

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ps 89:3–4.

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

For as in the day of Midian’s defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

Every warrior’s boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood

will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Is 9:2–7.

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—
and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Is 11:1–3.

The days are coming,” declares the Lord,
“when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.

In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called:
The Lord Our Righteous Savior.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Je 23:5–6.

I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.

“ I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of savage beasts so that they may live in the wilderness and sleep in the forests in safety

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Eze 34:23–25.

Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ho 3:5.

In that day

“I will restore David’s fallen shelter—

I will repair its broken walls

and restore its ruins—

and will rebuild it as it used to be,

so that they may possess the remnant of Edom

and all the nations that bear my name,”

declares the Lord, who will do these things.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Am 9:11–12.