

What's the Story?

Christmas is about the Incarnation – God becoming man.

How does the Gospel of Mark display the Incarnation of Jesus.

- There is no Christmas story, no birth narrative.
- The story of Jesus' birth would be useless without the remainder of his life's story.
 - o Why is it that the secular world accepts and celebrates the story of baby Jesus, but fails to make the connection that He grew up and changed everything?

The "Son of God"

- Is Jesus, God or something less?
 - o Demi God? – Half God and Half Human?
 - o Hercules?
 - o Percy Jackson

What's the Point? – *Jesus was God in the Flesh – Fully Human, Fully God*

¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 3:11–12.

² [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 5:7.

The Claims of Others

- Demons
 - o Mark 3:11-12 - Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." ¹² But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him. ¹
 - o Mark 5:7 - He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" ²
- The Centurion
 - o Mark 15:39 – ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" ³
- God
 - o Mark 1:9-11 - At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."⁴

³ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 15:39.

⁴ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 1:9–11.

- Mark 9:7 - Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him"⁵

The Claims of Mark

- Mark 1:1 - *The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God*⁶ - Actual claim of Deity
 - Roman audience
 - Priene Calendar Inscription 9 BC
 - A new calendar based on his birthday
 - Augustus Caesar – 27BC-14AD – made Julius a God making him a “son of god”
 - Describing Caesar Augustus as a Christ (Saviour) who has ended the wars and brought peace to the empire. Resulting in the birthday of their god (or Son of God) signalling the Gospel or Good news for the world because of him.

The letter by Paul Fabius Maximus: -

Decree of the Greek Assembly in the province of Asia, on motion of the High Priest Apolionios, son of Menophilos, of Aizanoi whereas Providence that orders all our lives has in her display of concern and generosity in our behalf adorned our lives with the highest good: Augustus, whom she has filled with arete [virtue] for the

⁵ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 9:7.

⁶ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 1:1.

benefit of humanity, **and has in her beneficence granted us and those who will come after us [a Saviour** (σωτήρα)] who has made war to cease and who shall put everything [in peaceful] order; and whereas Caesar, [when he was manifest], transcended the expectations of [all who had anticipated the good news], not only by surpassing the benefits conferred by his predecessors but by leaving no expectation of surpassing him to those who would come after him, **with the result that the birthday of our God** (τοῦ θεοῦ) **signalled** (ἦρξεν δὲ τῷ κόσμῳ τῷ δι’ αὐτὸν εὐαγγελίων ἡ γενέλιος ἡμέρα τοῦ θεοῦ) **the beginning of Good News for the world because of him**; [proconsul Paul Fabius Maximus] has discovered a way to honour Augustus that was hitherto unknown among the Greeks, namely to reckon time from the date of his nativity; therefore, with the blessings of Good Fortune and for their own welfare, the Greeks in Asia decreed that the New Year begin for all the cities on September 23, which is the birthday of Augustus; and, to ensure that the dates coincide in every city, all documents are to carry both the Roman and the Greek date, and the first month shall, in accordance with the decree, be observed as the Month of Caesar, beginning with 23 September, the birthday of Caesar."⁷

- Making the claim that Jesus is the true saviour, the true Deity and no ruler, Roman or otherwise can rightly lay claim to that statement.

⁷ Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis, MO.: Clayton Pub. House, 1982), 217.

The Claims of Jesus the Son of Man

- The Case For Christmas - Strobel pg. 28
- Daniel 7:13-14 - ¹³“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was **one like a son of man**,^o coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.⁸
 - o Son of Man was a divine claim and not a claim to human frailty. In it he was making the claim to be the Son of God.

Son of God and Son of Man

Both titles hold a heavenly claim. Both titles interact with God as the Father. Both titles are of Jesus as he interacts closely with both the Father and with the Spirit. We need to understand Jesus in the sense and context of all of his titles and names to understand that he is more than just a son. He was fully God in human form.

⁸ [*The New International Version*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Da 7:13–14.

What's the Problem? – *We see Jesus as less than who he is.*

- We must have a balanced view of Jesus with regards to his humanity and his divinity
 - o If he is less Human than God, we lose the understanding of his sufferings and temptations. He becomes something that we cannot relate to.
 - o If he is less God than he is Human, then his authority to forgive sins becomes void. If he becomes less than the Father and the Spirit, Jesus turns into a great moralist at best.

Mark showed us that Jesus was God in the Flesh, The Son of God, through his life and ministry.

- Through calming the storm, Feeding thousands, Walking on water, Healing people, Casting out demons, raising the dead, rising from the dead, and most of all the forgiving of sins. See chapter 3 of *The Case for Christmas*.
- Others recognized Jesus as the Son of God.
 - o When the centurion saw Jesus die, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God.”
 - o How do you recognize Jesus?

- How do others in the world recognize Jesus in you?
- Who and what are we worshipping?
 - Like the Roman Imperial cult, are we deifying the celebrities and politicians around us? Maybe even our spouses or our children? Are we continuing to worship idols such as money, work or time?

What's the Difference? – *Go back to the beginning*

- “The meaning of Mark’s opening line influences how we understand his closing lines (16:7-8). The resurrection call to meet Jesus in **Galilee** is an invitation to go back once more to the *beginning*. It is an invitation to begin again, to experience insight after blindness, victory after defeat, renewed discipleship after failure. It is an invitation to recognize the true nature of the **Christ**, the **Son of God**, in the light of the passion and resurrection. On this reading, Mark 1:1 is not only a way of getting the narrative started. It is a way of summarizing its message and its impact.⁹

Mark is about the Good news!

- Go back to the beginning. The Good news of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God! Remember what the story is all about!
- “At times in the story, dark clouds loom; tragedy creates silver linings, keeping hope alive. A persecuted church needs to remember that.”¹⁰

How do we handle adversity, ie. Being evicted from our church building? The Gospel is the Good News! The good news that Jesus is our saviour, that He is God and that He will get us through rough patches. Trust in him.

- Hebrews 4:14-16 - ¹⁴ *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, ^P Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.* ¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our*

⁹ Timothy J. Geddert, *Mark*, 31.

¹⁰ Timothy J. Geddert, *Mark*, 31.

weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. ¹¹

- 1. Why do we celebrate Christmas? To go back to the beginning. To see baby Jesus in light of his entire life. That it was his life, his ministry, his death, and his resurrection that proved to us that God had indeed made a physical presence here on earth as Jesus Christ.**
- 2. How else can you go back to the beginning this week and reflect on your full understanding of the story of Jesus and how you now understand him to be the Son of God?** Maybe take a trip to Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford and visit the Metzger Collection. Take a tour through history and look at the Pilate Stone.
- 3. How do you view Christmas? Does the Christmas story and Jesus' life and ministry seem like a fairytale? Or do you understand it to be historically true?** Maybe take a trip to Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford and visit the Metzger Collection. Take a tour through history and look at the Pilate Stone and other artifacts. Take every opportunity to make your faith more real understandable for yourself and others.

The Metzger Collection

Wednesday & Friday & 2nd Saturday of the Month

11 am - 4 pm

¹¹ [The New International Version](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 4:14–16.