

I want to suspend for a time - not cancel altogether! - the thread I have been pursuing on how I came to be interested in the textual criticism of the New Testament, which itself is a spin-off (using roughly similar metaphors) of the bigger thread that I started, which at the time of inception I anticipated would be all of two posts long, of why I ended up being equipped to write trade books more than most of my colleagues who were doing research that, on the surface, seemed to be far more amenable to trade books.

But I want to suspend the thread for now, to be resumed soon, because there is something else I'm particularly interested in and I want to strike it while the iron is hot. I'm flying off to Denmark on Sunday to give a lecture and a couple of academic discussions at the University of Southern Denmark. The topic: the relationship between the worship of the Roman emperor (the "imperial cult") and the rise of Christology (the understanding of Christ).

The Roman emperor was called "Savior," "Lord," "Son of God," and "God." So was Jesus. At the same time. Was that a historical accident?

I touch on that question in my book [How Jesus Became God](#). In the book I was focused almost entirely on how the early Christians understood who Christ was, and how this understanding developed over time - that is, how the followers of Jesus who originally thought he might be the Jewish messiah (the human king of Israel) began to think he was a divine being, to thinking he was in some sense, along with the Father, also God, to thinking he was the eternal God who created the universe and was the second member of the Trinity. I continue to consider this one of the most important questions of the Christian religion, and in some sense an absolutely vital question for anyone interested in the history of our civilization (since it had such an enormous impact).

Over the past few weeks I have shifted my focus of interest onto another question, the question of why and how the emperor of Rome also came to be thought of as the Son of God, and in some sense God, the Lord, the Savior of all people. There is a ton of scholarship on this question, and it is a very interesting question I think.

My sense is that many people who have some vague sense that the emperor was worshiped don't quite understand ...

THE REST OF THIS POST IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY. Join!!! You'll get tons of valuable information and discussion, and for very little money indeed. And all money goes to charity! So get with it and join today!!

You need to be logged in to see this part of the content. Please [Login](#) to access.



[The Divine Realm in Antiquity
Arguments, Evidence, and Changing Your Mind](#)