The Pre-Incarnation and the Incarnation
Class 1

Why Christology?
The doctrine of Christology pertains to the person, saving work, role, and exaltation of Jesus Christ.

Is the doctrine of Christology important? If so, why so? It is not only important, but the doctrine of Christology is central to the Bible, redemptive history, and the gospel. Indeed, without a right understanding of the role of Jesus in Christian thought, one cannot understand Christianity at all.

Our goal in this course is to give an overview of the Doctrine of Christology for the church. Our hope is that the church will have a biblical and accurate understanding of Christ's person and saving work.

Tonight's Topic: "The Pre-Incarnation and Incarnation of Jesus Christ"

The Pre-Incarnation of the Son of God

1. The Pre-Incarnate Son of God
2. The Trinity
3. The Pre-Incarnate Glory

John 1:1-2
John 8:58
John 17:5, 24

Second London Baptist Confession (1689), Chapter 2 Article 3
"*In the divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences: the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one subsistence, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on Him*."

The Incarnation of the Son of God
John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Hebrews 2:14-18
1 John 1:1-4
1 John 4:1-3
Philippians 2:6-11

Note several aspects of the incarnation, as indicated by Philippians 2:6-7

First, the preexistence and deity of the Son of God

Second, the attitude of the Son of God related to the incarnation

Third, the emptying of the Son of God in the incarnation

Fourth, the incarnation and servanthood

Fifth, the incarnation and the relationship to humanity (even gender)

Sixth, the incarnation and the suffering and death of Jesus Christ

Seventh, the incarnation and the obedience of Jesus Christ

1) The active obedience of Christ
2) The passive obedience of Christ

Eighth, the incarnation, the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and kingdom victory

Note below the various categories that relate to the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

1. The Sacrifice and Humiliation of the Incarnate Son of God
   i. The incarnation and sacrificial humiliation
   ii. The incarnation and willing and loving deference

   The incarnation of the Son of God was a coming down. We are to understand this coming down not so much in spatial terms, but in ontological terms. This means that God the Son became flesh, actually becoming human, which is the product of what He made. He the Creator took some aspect of His creation. This is a mystery beyond word and thought.

2. Nature and Significance of the Incarnation

   The nature and significance of the incarnation cannot adequately in finite terms fully be expressed. This is beyond our capacity to understand and probe. I do want to raise the following ten sub-categories of the nature and significance of the incarnation to give us some breadth and scope of the importance of the incarnation and how the incarnation engages the gospel and the Christian faith.

   i. The nature of the incarnation and condescension (willing deference and sacrifice for the benefit of others)
   ii. The nature of the incarnation and suffering (the entire incarnation experience for Jesus was suffering)
   iii. The nature of the incarnation and ontological humanity
      a. The physical body
      b. Ontological and essential humanity without sin
   iv. The relationship between ontology and morphology in the incarnation
   v. The relationship of the incarnation to the elevation of created humanity
   vi. The significance of the incarnation and the federal headship of Christ
   vii. The significance of the incarnation and the atonement
   viii. The significance of the incarnation and the justification of God's people
   ix. The significance of the incarnation and the metaphysical intercession of Christ
   x. The significance of the incarnation and the salvation and metamorphosis of creation in redemption

3. The Incarnation and God's Covenant of Redemption
   i. The incarnation and the Messiah's suffering (Old Testament presents the Messiah as a suffering servant)

ii. The incarnation (in the OT the Messiah is a deliverer or savior of God's people), God's salvation of His people, and Old Testament typology (typology anticipating Jesus)
    a. Moses
    b. Joseph
    c. David
    d. Sacrificial system
iii. The incarnation and the Messiah's victory
    a. Messianic victory and God's chosen people
    b. Messianic victory and overcoming the enemy
    c. Messianic victory and the promised land

    The work and impact of the Messiah's salvation for God's people involves a number of important issues:
    i. Victory over evil
    ii. Exaltation of God and good
    iii. The restoration of Creation
    iv. The establishment of righteousness in human history
    v. The fulfillment of God's kingdom both in time and space
    vi. The bridging of God's earthly kingdom to eternal realities

4. The Incarnation and the Active Righteousness of Christ under the Law
   Galatians 4:4
   i. The incarnation put the Son of God under the law
   ii. The incarnation obligated the Son of God to the law
   iii. The incarnation prescribed perfection to the law through obedience to Jesus
   iv. The incarnation and active obedience
       a. Active obedience and absolute perfection
       b. Active obedience and perpetual perfection
       c. Active obedience and the imputation of righteousness to believers

5. The Incarnation and the Suffering of Christ
   i. The incarnation and the suffering of God
   ii. The incarnation, imputational sin, and suffering for sin
   iii. The incarnation and the wrath of God
   iv. The incarnation and the atonement for sin

   The Bible repeatedly portrays Christ's incarnational suffering as indicative of God's redemptive work on behalf of His people. Thus, we have in Christ's suffering glorious realities

6. The Incarnation and the Resurrection
   i. The incarnation and the resurrection body
   ii. The incarnation and the federal representation of God's people
   iii. The incarnation and the intercessory ministry of Christ
   iv. The incarnation, victory over sin, death, and Satan, and the kingdom

7. The Incarnation and the Mediatorial Ministry of Christ
   i. The incarnation and the prayer mediation of Christ
   ii. The incarnation and the perpetual advocacy of Christ

8. The Incarnation and the Second Coming of Christ
    i. The incarnation and the resurrection of the body
    ii. The incarnation and the re-creation of material reality
    iii. The incarnation and eternal victory over evil

    2nd London Baptist Confession, Chapter 8 Article 2
    "*The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with Him who made the world, who upholds and governs all things He has made, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures; so that two whole, perfect and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man*."

Sam Waldron in his exposition of the Second London Confession in this 8th chapter on Christ identifies the "true humanity" (Waldron's expression) in seven areas:

The promise of man (fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy that the Messiah would be a man)
The designation of a man (Christ became a man/human and never ever again will lose His humanity)
The consciousness of man (Jesus thought of Himself as a man, not just a man, but certainly a man)
The appearance of a man (Jesus did not simply appear as a man, but He did appear to others as a man)
The body of a man (Jesus had a human fleshly and real body)
The soul of a man (Jesus possessed a human soul, which helps explain His inward suffering and joy)
The limitations of man (Jesus in His earthly humanity assumed certain limitations associated with this)

<u>Summary and Final Points</u>

1. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is a mystery.
    i. The depths of our epistemological limitations
    ii. The exalted state of Christ's complex essence of being
    iii. The permanence of Christ's humanity

2. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is the foundation of God's applied redemption.
    i. Without the incarnation, there is no sacrifice for sin
    ii. Without the incarnation, there is no atonement for sin
    iii. Without the incarnation, there is no mediation before God
    iv. Without the incarnation, there is no permanent hope for transformation in the kingdom
        1) Second coming of Christ
        2) Re-creation of the new heavens and the new earth
        3) Permanence of justification, adoption, and eternal home in heaven