Knowing Jesus as the *Incarnate Son*

1. Introduction.

a. In this session, look at key texts that summarize ***who*** Jesus is as ***the incarnate Son***.
b. Texts also are crucial in the Church's dogmatic formulation (Nicaea and Chalcedon).
c. ***Question***: Why is affirming Christ's humanity important?
   i. Answer: Apart from the divine Son becoming human we have no Redeemer.
   ii. Representation requires identification. See Hebrews 5:1 and the "priestly" theme, along with the last Adam theme (see below for Hebrews 2).
d. ***Important to remember***: The first denial of Christ was regarding his humanity.
   i. Gnosticism → Docetism (*dokeō* = to seem, to appear).
   ii. See John 1:14; 1 John 1:1-3; 4:1-3.
e. ***Our Focus is threefold***:
   i. (1) ***How*** did the eternal Son become human?
   ii. (2) ***Why*** did the eternal Son become human?
   iii. (3) ***How*** are we to understand Christ's life as true God and true man?
f. ***Before we turn to these points, we need to ask:*** **What is a Human Nature?**
   i. Humans are the created image of God (meaning God's representatives).
   ii. A human nature consists of a body and a soul (=including intellect, will, emotions).

2. *How* did God the Son become Human?

a. Westminster Shorter Catechism, q. 22: "How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?" Answer: "Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin."
b. **Matthew 1 and Luke 1 (=also see John 1:14)**.
   i. The incarnation is an act of ***assumption***, not subtraction.
   ii. Virgin conception (=birth). It is the ***means*** by which the incarnation occurred.
   iii. ***How is the virgin conception presented in Scripture?***
      1. Fulfillment of OT expectation (Isa 7:14).
         a. Dawning of the new covenant predicted by the OT prophets.
         b. Agency of the Spirit tied to OT expectation (=Isa 11, 42, 61; cf. Joel 2)
         c. New Creation (Gen 1:2).
      2. Supernatural agency, tied to God's theophanic presence made present in Christ.
      3. Jesus is the "second man" and "last Adam," who is also the LORD (Isa 7:14).
   iv. ***Trinitarian agency*** (Father sends, the Son assumes, by the agency of the Spirit).
      1. Unfallen human nature.
      2. Humanity of Christ (Body + Soul). Luke 2:52. Our Savior is/must be truly human.
   v. **Significance**.
      1. ***Salvation is of God***. Humans do not initiate salvation. God must act, provide.
      2. ***Jesus is utterly unique*** (=but we must set the virgin conception within the OT).
         a. Virgin conception allows us to make sense of how incarnation occurred.
         b. It helps us avoid Adoptionism/Nestorianism and Double Paternity.

c. The human nature of Christ never exists apart from its assumption by the divine Son. Christ is now true God and true man.

3. ***Issue of the transmission of sin***. Contra Rome's "immaculate conception."
   a. Christ is not "in Adam" as we are. No father, plus agency of the Spirit.
   b. Thus, Jesus is the head of the new creation, and the head of a new humanity.
4. Jesus' human nature was sinless/unfallen. Impeccable yet tempted (Heb 4:15). ***Implication***: He can identify with us ***and*** also help us as our Lord and Savior.

3. *Why* did God the Son become human?

a. Crucial question that the church has wrestled with (see Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*; Anselm, *Why did God become man?*). Best place to answer this question: **Heb 2:5-18**.

b. Context of Hebrews 2: "Jesus is greater than angels."

c. Four Reasons for the Incarnation (Why God the Son became human).

i. ***To Fulfill God's Creation Intention for Humans*** (2:5-9). Use of Psalm 8.

ii. ***To Restore Us to our Sonship*** (2:10-13).

iii. ***To Destroy the Power of Death and Satan*** (2:14-16).

iv. ***To Become our Merciful and Faithful High Priest*** (2:17-18).

d. Other Reasons.

i. *To be our example and pattern in life* (1 Jn 2:6; 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29; Heb 12:2).

ii. *To be our pattern for our redeemed bodies* (1 Cor 15:23, 42ff; Col 1:18).

4. *How* we are to Understand Christ's Life as True God and True man?

a. Incarnation is not a loss of deity, but the assumption of a human nature (Phil 2:6-8).

b. As a result of the incarnation the divine Son subsists and acts in two natures (his divine nature that he fully shares with the Father and Spirit, and now in a human nature).

c. He does not change the integrity of either nature, confusing them, or melding them into a divine-human hybrid. In Christ, there is a Creator-creature distinction, yet both natures are united in his person (=the eternal Son).

d. The Son's action in his human nature does not override the limitations of that nature: he truly lives, experiences the world, and acts as a man (Luke 2:52, etc.).

e. But the Son, our Lord Jesus, is not limited to acting through his human nature alone since he continues to act through his divine nature, as he has from eternity (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3).

5. **Concluding Reflection: The Glory of Jesus who is the *incarnate divine Son*.**
   a. Why does he do this for us? There is no other way to redeem us. We need ***him,*** precisely as God the Son incarnate. For proof of this, see the Bible's entire covenantal story.
   b. Jesus is unique, exclusive, and all-sufficient because of ***who*** he is and ***what*** he does.
   c. From Scripture, the church had to affirm: (1) Jesus is the eternal Son, the second person of the Trinity who became flesh; (2) As the eternal/divine Son he is truly God; (3) As the Son who assumed our human nature, he is truly man.
   d. Any view that denied these truths, denied the Jesus of the Bible. Life and death.