Knowing Who Jesus is from the Bible's Covenantal Story

1. **Introduction**.
   a. Our understanding of ***who*** Jesus is and ***what*** he does must be developed from Scripture and its entire story, first starting in Genesis and then moving from the OT to the NT.
   b. ***Francis Schaeffer put his finger on this years ago***. He wrote:

> "I have come to the point where, when I hear the word 'Jesus'—which means so much to me because of the Person of the historic Jesus and His work—I listen carefully because I have with sorrow become more afraid of the word 'Jesus' than almost any other word in the modern world. The word is used as a contentless banner ... there is no rational scriptural content by which to test it. ... ***Increasingly over the past few years the word 'Jesus,' separated from the content of the Scriptures, has been the enemy of the Jesus of history, the Jesus who died and rose and is coming again and who is the eternal Son of God***" (*Escape from Reason*).

   c. This is especially important to remember in our day (=secular, postmodern, pluralistic). What is needed? Paul at Athens (Acts 17). How does he expound/proclaim Christ?
   d. In fact, if we trace the Bible's grand metanarrative—starting in creation, accounting for the fall, and unfolding God's promise of a coming Redeemer through the biblical covenants to undo what the first Adam did—we discover that Scripture gradually unveils the teaching that **Jesus *is* God the Son incarnate**.
   e. Let's do this by unpacking 4 biblical-theological truths from the Bible's story that provide the building blocks from the OT for the NT understanding who Christ is and that establish who he is as the divine-human Redeemer (=eternal Son become human for us).

2. **4 Truths from Bible's Story Establishing Christ's Divine-Human Identity**.
   a. ***1st: Creation: The Creator-Covenant Lord*** **(Doctrine of God)**.
      i. ***Theology***: Not a truism to say everything begins and ends with God.
         1. Same for Christology. Why start with doctrine of God? Because we cannot correctly know Jesus' person/work, especially as the ***divine Son***, apart from starting with the eternal triune God, the Creator/providential Lord.
         2. Who God is gives a specific ***theistic*** shape to Scripture's theology/worldview, and the Bible identifies Jesus as the Son of the one true God. See Paul at Athens.
      ii. Genesis 1:1 is profound.
         1. Scripture begins with the declaration that God is Creator/LORD.
         2. Even "before the beginning" (Trinity).
      iii. **Significance/Importance (4 areas)**.
         1. ***Creator-creature***. Strict monotheism (=no pantheism, deism). Jesus will be understood on the side of this ***one God***. Christology: 2 natures.
         2. ***Theistic Universe***.
         3. **Aseity**. Describes God's self-sufficiency, independence, and Lordship (Ps 50:12-14; Acts 17:24-25). *Metaphysics*; *Epistemology*; *Ethics*. Think of the latter.
            a. God is good, holy, just. God is moral standard. He is the law.

b. Holy, Judge, King. Judge of the earth (Gen 18:24; Deut 32:4 – "He is the Rock, his works are perfect, all his ways are just").
c. ***Why important? Moral universe rooted in God's nature/character***.
d. ***To anticipate: Sin before God***.
   i. God ***can't*** overlook our sin. He ***won't*** deny himself.
   ii. God ***must*** judge/punish (see wrath: expression of his holiness/justice).
   iii. Wages of sin is death (Gen 2; Rom 6:23) → penal + full demand.
   iv. ***If God chooses to forgive/grace, how can he be just and justifier?***
e. **Question*: Who can pay for our sin, satisfy God's perfect moral demand?***

4. **Covenant God**.
   a. He enters into relationship with us. Creates us for this relationship.
   b. God demands perfect obedience (devotion, loyalty) → To love God.

b. ***2nd: Adam, Creation Covenant, and Requirement of Covenant Obedience***.
   i. ***Making sense of the incarnation***, ***why*** God the Son became man, and ***what*** he did in his work to save us from our sins (Matt 1:21) requires a second truth taken from the Bible's story: ***the nature of human as image-sons and covenant creatures***. This requires that we go back to Adam, to trace the link between the command and curse of the first Adam and the incarnation and work of the divine Son as last Adam.
   ii. ***1st: Think of humans***.
   iii. ***2nd: Think of Adam. Scripture divides humans as falling under two representative heads: the first Adam and the last Adam (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:12-28)***.
   iv. ***God's demand of obedience is important (Gen 2:15-17)***. Adam, as a creature *and* as our covenant head, was called to ***covenant loyalty*** and ***complete obedience***. What else would God demand? But by the ***promise*** of the covenant, possibility of glorification.
   v. ***Why is this significant for identifying Christ's person/work?***

c. ***3rd: Nature of Human Problem and the Problem of Divine Forgiveness***.
   i. Central to the covenant and the purpose of our creation is that God has created humans to know him as his image-sons, to display his glory, and to expand the borders of Eden to the uttermost parts of the world. But what happens when humans rebel against God, deface the image, and do not act as sons? Can the divine purpose still be accomplished? How is covenant peace possible without covenant obedience? More to the point, can God tolerate sin? If not, how will God forgive sin?
   ii. ***Understatement to say that Genesis 3 is crucial in the Bible's story***.
      1. Sin is against God – a very specific kind of God – in ***history***.
      2. Sin is revolution at the heart of the universe – reversal of creation order.
      3. Adam, our covenant representative, ***disobeys*** and thus takes us all down.
      4. Sin is universal and pervasive (=read Genesis….). **Rom 3:10, 23; 6:23**.
   iii. ***What is God's response to our sin? See God's Promise (Gen 3:15)***.
      1. **Instead** of leaving us to ourselves and bringing full judgment upon us, ***God acts in grace, choosing to provide a Redeemer to reverse the manifold effects of sin***.

2. ***This promise***, in embryonic form, anticipates the coming of a Redeemer, the "seed of the woman" (=another Adam), who though wounded himself in conflict, will destroy the works of Satan and restore goodness to this world.
3. ***This promise*** creates the expectation that when it is finally realized, all sin and death will be defeated ***and*** the fullness of God's saving reign will come.
4. ***But how will this come about?*** *Act of power/deliverance? Example?*

iv. **As Scripture unfolds***, it becomes clear that in order to restore the creation, to destroy death, to reverse the effects of sin, to make us right before God, something more than a power encounter is needed, or an example of God's love, or even some kind of suffering which upholds the moral governance of the universe.*

1. Instead, what is needed is a ***substitute***, who stands legally/representatively in my place, obeys perfectly, bears my individual sin/guilt by propitiating God's wrath, and in him achieving my justification before God.
2. ***A human substitute, but also more than mere human***.

v. **Why*? "*The Problem of Forgiveness**.**"**

d. ***4th: Key Point of Covenants:*** **God Alone *Saves* thru his obedient Son/King**.

i. Just as human sin and God's promise to redeem us and to forgive our sin bring tension into the Bible's story, so the resolution of this tension raises the question of just ***who*** it is that is qualified to establish God's saving kingdom and rule on earth and by justifying the ungodly before God. God created humans as his image-sons to rule over the world (Gen 1:26-31; Ps 8). Yet, no one "in Adam," is able to do so. Who, then, is able to establish ***God's*** rule, to undo what Adam did by rendering perfect covenant obedience, to pay for our sins before God, and to render God's verdict of justification over us? **The answer**: Jesus alone who is the incarnate divine Son.

ii. ***Scripture teaches this truth by the progression of the biblical covenants***.

iii. ***On the one hand***, Scripture teaches that fulfillment of God's promises will be accomplished ***through a man*** as developed by various typological persons such as Adam, Noah, Moses, Israel, and David, all seen in terms of the covenants.

1. **Epitome** is found in ***David/Davidic covenant*** (**2 Sam 7:14, 19; Ps 2, 72**).
2. **But problem***: All of the Davidic kings fail* (=cut off, stump, **Isa 11**).

iv. ***Yet God keeps his promise: Salvation is of the LORD***.

1. Message of the Prophets (=All post-Davidic).
2. Yhwh must/will save (**Ezek 34; Jonah 2:9**). He will keep his promises!

v. ***But how?*** By God's provision of a human (=greater David, priest-king, last Adam) but who is more than a mere human. One who is ***identified with God***. **How so?**

vi. **Coming Divine Messiah**.

1. He has the names/titles of God (**Isa 9:6-7; Ps 45**).
2. He shares the rule of God (**Ps 110**).
3. In him, ***God's saving rule*** is brought to the world (**Ps 2, 72)**, which ultimately results in a new creation (**Isa 11, 65**).
4. He has the **Spirit** and pours out **God's Spirit** (**Isa 11, 42, 61; Joel 2; Ezek 36-37**)

5. **And most important**: He achieves the forgiveness of sin, ***which only God can do, by the inauguration of a new covenant*** (=**Isa 53**). All the Prophets look the coming of the Messiah, ratification of New Covenant → New Creation.

vii. **New Covenant.** ***What is most significant about it?*** **See Jer 31:31-34**.

viii. **Primary message of the covenants**: Unless ***God alone*** acts to accomplish his promises, we have no salvation. After all, ***who*** ultimately can achieve the forgiveness of sins other than ***God alone***? If there is to be salvation at all, **God *himself*** must save, *which is precisely what he has done in/through God the Son incarnate*.

3. **Conclusion: Moving from the OT Foundation to the NT**.