The Eternal Son

Week 1 – The Deity of Christ

Class Schedule

- Week 1: The Eternal Word (the deity of Christ)
- Week 2: The Word Made Flesh (the humanity of Christ)

  NO CLASS 11/22

- Week 3: One Person, Two Natures (the hypostatic union)
- Week 4: Born to Save (the mission of Christ)

Introduction: Before Bethlehem

1. Historical Setting: The Arian Controversy

2. The Biblical Witness to Christ's Deity

Christology: A cumulative witness: divine status, works, and titles

- Bavinck: *At all times and from all sorts of directions, this deity of Christ has been denied and opposed. But Scripture teaches no other doctrine.*[1]
- Carson: *'Mark has told you about the beginning of Jesus' public ministry; I want to show you that the starting point of the gospel can be traced farther back than that, before the beginning of the entire universe.*[2]

The Divine Status of Christ

- Divine attributes
    - Wellum: *All the divine attributes that make God who he is and enable him to work as only he does are found in Christ.*[3]
- Divine rule

[1] Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 282.
[2] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 114.
[3] Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 192.

- Divine worship
    - Wellum: *If Christ does have all the divine attributes, and exercises the divine rule of God himself, then it makes sense that he would receive all the worship, devotion, confidence, and trust that God alone demands and deserves.*[4]

The Divine Works of Christ

- Christ creates and sustains, forgives sins, judges, gives the Spirit, and raises the dead.

- Christ is the inaugurator of the kingdom of God and the age to come.

    - Wellum: *Scripture presents the kingdom of God primarily in terms of the rule of God, the obedience of his people, and the judgement of his enemies. By definition, these three components of God's kingdom require the presence and power of the divine king. So when Jesus ascends to the throne of heaven, demands and enables the obedience of the church, and triumphs over all of his enemies, including Satan, sin, and death, we must understand that these divine works of Christ bear witness to his deity.*[5]

The Divine Titles of Christ

- God (*theos*):

[4] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 195.
[5] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 198.

- Lord (*kyrios*):

- Son of God (*huios tou theou*):

3. Three Great Christological Texts

John 1:1–18 — The Word Who Was God

- Wellum: *It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the first few verses of John's Gospel for the rest of the book and for the rest of the NT.*[6]

- Sonship and Generation—the relationship between God the Father and the "Word"

    - *Monogenēs* — Eternally Begotten:

    - Eternal generation:

    - Why eternal sonship matters:

[6] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 201.

Colossians 1:15–20 — The Son Who Is Supreme Over Creation

Hebrews 1:1–4 (with 1:5–12) — The Son Who Reveals God's Glory

4. Nicaea: The Nicene Answer

The Nicene Confession (325)

- Key section in Nicene Creed:
    - I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
      the Only Begotten Son of God,
      born of the Father before all ages.
      God from God, Light from Light,
      true God from true God,
      begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
      through him all things were made.

Why Nicaea Matters for Christmas

Conclusion: The Wonder of Christmas

- Who was Jesus before Bethlehem?