

ONE – THE PREINCARNATE CHRIST

The doctrine of Christ may include both a study of his person and His work. However since His principle work, soteriology is usually separated from Christology. His other works are normally considered under Christology.

In this four week series we will seek to study the person of Jesus Christ. This doctrine can be organised more or less chronologically. The study of the pre-incarnate Christ comes first. This will be followed by a section on Christ in His humiliation, i.e. during his earthly life. Following this His present and future ministries. We can hope to tackle problems like the meaning of *Kenosis* (self emptying) and the relation of His two natures and impeccability.

The doctrine of the person of Christ is crucial to the Christian faith. It is basic to soteriology, for if our Lord was not who he claimed to be, then His atonement was a deficient, not sufficient, payment for sin.

I. THE PREEXISTENCE OF THE PREINCARNATE CHRIST

a. The meaning of pre-existence

The pre-existence of Christ means that he pre-existed before His birth. For some scholars it means that he existed before creation and before time. Denial of pre-existence almost always includes a denial of eternity and vice-versa.

b. The importance of pre-existence

- At birth – If Christ came into existence at birth, then no eternal trinity exists.
- Not God – If Christ was not pre-existent then he could not be God, because among other attributes, God is eternal.
- Liar – If Christ was not pre-existent then he lied. Because he claimed to be. And the question arises, what else did he lie about.

c. The evidence of pre-existence.

- His heavenly origin – John 3:13,31
- His Work as creator – John 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 1:2
- His relationship with God – John 10:30; 17:5; Phil 2:6
- His attributes - Deity – Col 2:9
- His relation to John the Baptist – though John was born before Jesus, John acknowledged that Jesus existed before him. John 1:15, 30

II. THE ETERNITY OF THE PREINCARNATE CHRIST

a. The meaning of eternity

Eternity means, not only that Christ existed before his birth or even before creation but that he existed always, eternally.

b. The importance of eternity

If eternity is denied, then a) there is no trinity, b) Christ does not possess full deity and c) he lied.

c. The evidence of eternity

His relationship with God as of the same essence demonstrates eternity, since God is eternal.

Notice the word Charakter in Hebrews 1:3 which indicate that Christ is the exact representation of God's nature or essence.

Possession of divine attributes includes the attribute of eternity.

John 8:58 – Before Abraham was, I am.

John 1:1 – The Word was God.

Micah 5:2 – His goings forth are from the days of eternity.

III. THE ACTIVITY OF THE PREINCARNATE CHRIST

a. His activity as creator

- The extent of it – all things. He was involved in the creation of all things. John 1:3, Col 1:16; Heb 1:2
- The purpose of it – All things were created for him. Col 1:16
- The continuation of it – In Him all things hold together. Col 1:17

b. His activity as Angel

- His identity as Angel of Yahweh. The angel of Yahweh is a self manifestation of Yahweh, for He speaks as God, identifies himself with God and claims to exercise the prerogatives of God.
Gen 16:7 – 14; 21:17-18; 22:11-18; 31:11-13; Exodus 3:2; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-22; 13:3-22; II Samuel 24:16; Zachariah 1:12; 3:1; 12:8.

Yet he is distinguished from Yahweh

Gen 24:7; Zach 1:12-13;

Note – That he is a member of the trinity is indicated by the fact that the appearances of the Angel of Yahweh ceased after the incarnation.

- His ministries as Angel of Yahweh

- Messenger – Gen 16:7 -14; 22:11-18; 31:11-13
- Guide and protector of Israel – Exodus 14:19; 23:20; II Kings 19:35
- Instrument of Judgement on Israel – I Chronicles 21:1-27
- Agent of refreshment to Elijah – I Kings 19:5 – 7

Though our lord was not inactive in his Pre-incarnate state, his greatest works necessitated the incarnation. Nevertheless he stands magnificent in his person as the eternal God but as it were in the shadows waiting the spotlight of the incarnation to reveal his glory and grace.

John 1:17; Titus 2:11