

WHY FOUR GOSPELS? THE FOUR-FOLD PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

in
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

JOHN'S PRESENTATION OF THE FOUR-FOLD PORTRAIT OF CHRIST

We have often stated, throughout this series of studies, that all four of the evangelists tell all of the Gospel story; for we want no one to miss the truth that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John not only realized, but plainly said that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel's Messiah, the faithful Servant of the Lord, the sinless Son of Man, and the eternal Son of God.

We have sought to make very clear that, in emphasizing one particular phase of the Lord's Person and work, each evangelist included also the whole purpose for which He came into the world.

Accordingly, let us see how, from the very titles applied to Him by John, this four-fold portrait is presented in his record. And this is but one of many illustrations of this truth.

In the Prologue, as we have observed, His titles emphasize the Lord's eternal deity. Some of these names are found throughout the book; for example, "**the only begotten Son**" (1:18; 3:16, 18); "**the Lord**" (1:23; 6:68; 8:11); "**the Son of the living God**" (6:69); "**God**" (10:33); "**the Son of God**" (1:34). And then there are the repeated uses of "**I AM.**"

John refers to the Lord as Israel's Messiah by calling Him: "**The Christ**" (1:20); "**the Messiah**" (1:41; 4:25); "**that prophet,**" of whom Moses had written (1:21; 6:14; 7:40); "**the Lamb of God,**" of whom the Old Testament offerings and sacrifices were prophetic (1:29, 36); "**King of Israel**" (1:49). And identifying Christ with His earthly people, John wrote of Him as "**Rabbi**" (1:38, 49; 3:2); "**a Jew**" (4:9).

Portraying Him as the faithful Servant, John described the scene when the Lord washed His disciples' feet, teaching them, among other things, that "**the servant is not greater than his Lord**" (John 13:2-17).

The sinless humanity of Christ is seen in the often repeated name, “**Jesus**,” which means “**Saviour**.” It is one of His beautiful names of humiliation and suffering. Then He is called “**Jesus of Nazareth**” (1:45); “**the Saviour of the world**” (4:42); “**the Son of Man**” (3:13, 14; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 12 :34).

Another clear glimpse of the Lord’s humanity is seen in His weariness as He sat on Jacob’s well (4:6); and yet another, in His tears of compassion for Mary and Martha before He raised their brother from the dead (11:35).

These are only a few of the many instances which we might quote; but they suffice to illustrate the fact that John, as well as the other evangelists, gave us the four-fold portrait of the eternal God who became Man, in order to redeem a sinful world.

AN OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

This fourth Gospel falls into several logical divisions, which we have outlined as follows:

- I. The Prologue — The Eternal Word Incarnate, 1:1-14.**
- II. The Witness of John the Baptist to the Deity of Christ, 1:15-34; 3:22-36.**
- III. Christ’s Own Proof before the World concerning His Deity, 1:35-3:21; 4:1-12:50.**
- IV. Christ’s Deeper Teaching before His Disciples concerning His Deity, 13:1-17:26.**
- V. The Suffering and Death of “Jesus, the Son of God,” 18:1-19:42.**
- VI. The Resurrection of “Jesus, the Son of God” 20:1-31.**
- VII. The Epilogue — The Post-Resurrection Ministry of “Jesus, the Son of God,” (21:1-25).**

These divisions also fall logically into an orderly arrangement of separate details; but we are not attempting, in these studies, to make an analysis of the book.

This broad outline is suggested here, that we may the better comprehend the Holy Spirit’s central purpose and plan in presenting to us, in these pages, overwhelming proof that “**Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**”

“MANY INFALLIBLE PROOFS” OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST

And now let us turn to the chapters in their order to select a few of the “**many infallible proofs**” of the deity of Christ, as presented in John.

To list all of these would require very much more space than is allowed to us in this volume; but a careful reading of the book, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will reveal many precious truths concerning the deity and majesty and glory of our Lord Jesus.

Chapter One:

1. The Prologue.

We have already considered briefly; therefore we shall not repeat here the profound proofs of Christ's deity as set forth in the first fourteen verses of the book.

2. *The Witness of John the Baptist,*
1:15-34; 3:22-36:

The testimony of John the Baptist to the deity of Christ is the central theme of John 1:15-34; 3:22-36; whereas in the Synoptic Gospels it is the baptism of Jesus that takes preeminence. In John there is not even a direct statement that "**Jesus, the Son of God**" was baptized; instead, the circumstances which accompanied His baptism and manifested His deity are set forth in bold relief. The Synoptics show that, in His baptism, Christ was identifying Himself with His people, fulfilling "**all righteousness**"; John presents the Eternal One who came to reveal the Triune God.

There is no reference in John to the message of the forerunner of the King, recorded by Matthew in his portrait of Israel's Messiah, and saying,

"Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Instead, there is John's emphatic and oft-repeated witness to the eternal deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The following recorded facts speak for themselves:

(a) *The Preeminence of Christ:*

"He is preferred before me . . . whose shoe's latchet I am unworthy to unloose," 1:15, 27, 30.

(b) *The Preexistence of Christ,* who was not born in Bethlehem until John the Baptist was six months old:

"He was before me," 1:15, 30.

(c) *The "Altogether Lovely" Christ:* **"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,"** 1:17.

(d) *The Revelation of God in Christ:*

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (i.e., 'led him forth into full revelation')," 1:18.

(e) *The Christ of Prophecy:*

"He (John) said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias," 1:23; cf. Isaiah 40:3.

(f) *The Sacrificial Work of Christ,* in fulfillment of all the Old Testament shedding of blood by faith in the promised Redeemer:

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," 1:29, 36.

(g) *Heaven's Testimony to the Deity of Christ*: **"The Spirit... abode upon him,"** 1:32, 33.

(h) *John's Added Testimony*:

"And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God," 1:34.

(i) *The Preeminence of Christ Again Proclaimed by John*, 3:29-36:

It seems that **"some of John's disciples"** were wondering if John was jealous because the multitudes were following Jesus (3:25, 26); whereupon John took advantage of the occasion to proclaim once more the preeminence of Christ. Far from seeking the glory and honor due the Lord Jesus, John said,

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease," 3:29, 30.

While the church truth, represented by Paul in Ephesians by the bridegroom and the bride, was not revealed to John the Baptist — it was given first to Paul by special revelation; yet, guided by the Holy Spirit, John was led to proclaim Christ as the Heavenly Bridegroom, calling himself the **"friend of the bridegroom."**

This is another clear mark of inspiration; for John the Baptist was martyred before God made known to Paul the course of this church age, even long before the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, marking the birthday of the church. Like the twelve apostles during the Lord's life on earth, John evidently believed that Christ would **"restore the kingdom to Israel"** at His first coming into the world.

(j) *The Heaven-Sent Christ*:

"He that cometh from above . . . from heaven," 3:31; 3:34.

(k) *The Spirit-Filled Christ*:

"God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him," 3:34.

Indeed, the Holy Trinity, mentioned in this verse, are one God; and during His earthly life Christ was ever **"filled with the Holy Spirit,"** One with the Spirit!

(l) *"The Heir of All Things"*:

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand," 3:35.

(m) *The Son of God — The Giver of Eternal Life*:

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him,” 3:36.

3. The Testimony of Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael to the Deity of Christ,
John 1:35-51

This is one of the many portions of this fourth Gospel recorded only by John. As another has said, “It records the personal call of the first disciples, not the ministerial call, as in the Synoptics.” Here we can only mention the witness of three of these followers of the Lord to His deity and Lordship and Messiahship:

(a) *Andrew’s Witness:*

“We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ,” 1:41.

(b) *Philip’s Witness:*

“We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph,” 1:45.

(c) *Nathanael’s Witness:*

The Lord Jesus had proved His omniscience by telling Nathanael about his character, and where he had been sitting, **“under the fig tree,”** when Philip had called him. Moreover, He received worship from Nathanael, a clear mark of His claim to Deity; for He accepted these unmistakable words of praise due to God alone, **“Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel,”** 1:49.

4. Christ’s Claim That He Is “Jacob’s Ladder,”
1:50, 51:

Not only did the Lord prove His omniscience in this remarkable scene; not only did He receive worship from Nathanael; but He added yet further proof of His deity by stating plainly that He Himself is **“Jacob’s Ladder”** — the only **“Way unto the Father”** and heaven and eternal life!

Nathanael well knew the story of the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis; of how his forefather, Jacob, had stolen his brother’s blessing and had fled from the face of Esau, who had threatened to kill him.

Every godly Israelite knew that, on that night, Jacob saw a ladder touching earth and touching heaven, above which stood **“the LORD,”** and upon which **“the angels of God”** were **“ascending and descending.”**

Whether Jacob and his children’s children throughout succeeding generations realized it or not, that ladder was a type of Christ; for He Himself said so to Nathanael in the text before us.

He touched heaven because He was the eternal God; He touched earth because He **“was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”** And He is the only Way to eternal life and God’s presence forevermore! What a stupendous claim to deity the Lord Jesus made when He spoke those words to Nathanael!

“Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man,” 1:50, 51.

Chapter Two:

1. Jesus’ First Miracle — A Creative Act,
2:1-12:

Only John tells of Christ’s turning the water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee; and only the Lord God could perform that miracle, showing His power over nature when He **“manifested forth his glory,”** verse 11. **“This beginning of miracles”** gives us a glimpse of the majesty of the Living Word, commanding His servants to do His will.

2. The First Cleansing of the Temple,
2:13-25.

Three highlights of the latter part of chapter two prove yet again Christ’s deity:

(a) *His Application of the Old Testament Prophecy to Himself:*

“The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,” 2:17; cf. Psalm 69:9.

This was one way of His saying that He was the One of whom the prophets had written. Let us note also His use of the term, **“My Father,”** verse 16. And what shall we say of His majesty and authority, as He — alone — drove out the whole group of corrupt men who were desecrating His Father’s house?

(b) *His Prophecy of His Death and Resurrection:*

“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” 2:19-22.

Not only did the Lord Jesus foreknow all things, including the purpose for which He came into the world — to die and rise again; but He said here that He Himself would raise again the temple of His body. Only God could do that!

(c) *His Omniscience:*

“But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man,” 2:24, 25.

Chapter Three:

We have already observed that, in the comprehensive Prologue to this Gospel, the Lord Jesus is seen as the Life-Giver. Here, in chapter three, He goes to the very heart of the matter of the New Birth, and shows how the sinner must be “**born again**” by the “**washing of water by the word**” (Ephesians 5:26), as it is applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit.

Then, having declared His own omnipresence — an attribute of God alone — when He said that He “**came down from heaven**” and was “**in heaven**” (3:13), He once more foretold His approaching death by the reference to “**the serpent in the wilderness**” (3:14); and declared that faith in Him, and faith only, would give “**everlasting life**” to the guilty sinner. What a claim to Deity! Volumes have been written upon this chapter; yea, upon John 3:16 alone. Martin Luther aptly called it, “The Gospel in Miniature.”

We cannot pause here for the many beautiful lessons this chapter brings to our hearts; but, if there is one who does not know the story of “**the serpent in the wilderness**,” then let him turn to Numbers 21:5-9 to see why the Lord used that passage to explain the New Birth.

The serpent is the symbol of sin; for the serpent tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. Brass speaks to us of judgment, as in all the Jewish Tabernacle in the wilderness. When the sinful, murmuring Israelites looked at the serpent of brass lifted up in the wilderness, and were healed, they were just a picture or figure or type of sinners of all ages who look to Him “**who knew no sin . . . who became sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**” (II Corinthians 5:21).

“There’s life in a look at the Crucified One!” There is not one thing the sinner can do to earn his salvation; he can only look to Calvary by faith, and let the Holy Spirit regenerate his soul. That is what Christ meant when He foretold His being “**lifted up**” on the cross, “**that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**”

Before we leave this chapter, let us note our Lord’s reference to His virgin birth when He said that He is the Father’s “**only begotten Son**”; and applied to Himself the prophecy of Psalm 2:7, which is also definitely linked with His resurrection in Acts 13:33. These are unmistakable proofs of His deity.

We have already considered briefly the latter part of chapter three in connection with the witness of John the Baptist; therefore, we go on to the next chapter, all of which is recorded only in John.

Chapter Four:

1. Christ’s Claim That He Is the Giver of Living Water — Eternal Life,
4:10, 13, 14.

Later, in John 7:37-39, the Lord explained that “**the living water**” is none other than His own Holy Spirit.

2. *Christ's Omniscience:*

The Lord, in telling the sinful woman at Jacob's well all about her wicked life, surprised her, that He should know these things; and thus He revealed to all the world, through this record, His knowledge of the innermost heart of man.

3. *Christ's Declarative Statement That He Is Israel's Messiah,*
4:25, 26:

"The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."

4. *The Testimony of the Woman of Samaria,*
4:28, 29:

"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

5. *The Testimony of the Samaritans,*
4:39-42:

"Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Let us not overlook, in passing, that in 4:31-38, the Lord again referred to His Father as the One who had "sent" Him to do His will.

6. *The Healing of the Nobleman's Son,*
4:46-54,

Illustrates the power of the spoken word of the Living Word of God.

Chapter Five:

If we had only the fifth chapter of John to prove the deity of Christ, it alone is conclusive, and far more than measures up to the requirement of the Law of Moses; for that law demanded "**two or three witnesses**" to establish a fact in court. Here we have a startling array of irrefutable facts which cannot be denied, all declaring that Jesus of Nazareth is eternal God.

1. *Christ's Healing the Impotent Man,*
5:1-15:

The heart of the chapter is contained in the discourse of our Lord concerning His equality with the Father; and this sermon was spoken in answer to the Jews who accused Him for having healed the impotent man "**on the sabbath day.**"

The miracle proves that the spoken word of the Son of God was all that was needed to make an impotent man whole. Yet important as the miracle is in establishing the deity of Christ, we shall not dwell upon it here. It speaks for itself.

Following it, the Jews' accusation of Jesus led Him to make a significant statement, another definite claim to deity, "**My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,**" 5:17.

The next verse not only shows that the Jews knew Christ was calling God His Father, but it also states the theme of the Lord's discourse which follows,

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God," 5:18.

2. Christ's Discourse on His Equality with the Father:

We can only list in outline the main arguments here; but they are so wonderful that volumes could be written on this sermon alone!

(a) The Son Does the Works of the Father, 5:19-20

That is, He cannot act independently of His Father because they are one God — co-equal, co-existent, co-eternal! Skeptics have tried to pervert the true meaning here, implying that the Son is subservient to the Father; but they cannot alter the infallible Word of God, which means exactly what it says, that the Father and the Son are One, that they work toward the same purposes, that they cannot act independently of each other.

To illustrate His remark, the Lord cites two works committed unto Him by the Father, works which only God can do:

- (1) The Son raises the dead, 5:21, 25, 28, 29;*
- (2) the Son has authority to execute judgment, 5:22, 27, 30.*

When the dead are raised, they will come from their tombs at the voice of Jesus, the Son of God! And "**at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow**" when He acts as the righteous "**Judge of all the earth**"! (Philippians 2:10, 11).

- (b) The Son Is Worthy of Equal Honor with the Father, 5:23.*
- (c) The Son Is the Giver of Eternal Life, 5:24.*
- (d) The Son Is Self-Existent, 5:26.*
- (e) The Four-Fold Witness to the Deity of Christ, 5:31-47:*

We said a moment ago that the Law of Moses demanded "**two or three witnesses**" to establish a fact. That is why the Lord said, in verse 31, that the Jews would say that His own word was not sufficient to prove His deity — according to Jewish law.

Therefore, He went far beyond the law's requirement, and gave them four indisputable witnesses; He could have given very many more!

These four witnesses are wonderful:

- (1) *John the Baptist proclaimed Christ's deity, 5:33-35;*
- (2) *The Lord's own works, His mighty miracles, proved His deity, 5:36;*
- (3) *The Father, at Jesus' baptism and at His transfiguration, said that He is His "beloved Son," 5:37, 38;*
- (4) *The Old Testament Scriptures foretold Christ's coming into the world, 5:39-47.*

"Search the scriptures, for in them ye think that ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify [bear witness] of me."

And verse 46 is very forceful,

"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me."

The Jews boasted that they obeyed Moses; but Christ told them the truth, that Moses had written of His coming into the world; yet that they rejected Him of whom Moses wrote! Many teachings of Genesis, of the Jewish Tabernacle, of the Levitical offerings, of the feasts of Jehovah, of the smitten Rock in the wilderness, of the brazen serpent — these are just a few of the countless lessons Moses wrote, setting forth in prophecy and in type the coming into the world of Israel's Messiah and the Saviour of the world! It was Moses who said that He would be the "**Seed of woman,**" from the family of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah!

The heart is hard, indeed, that can spurn the fifth chapter of John!

Chapter Six:

Although chapter six falls logically into four parts, yet it is all related to Christ's feeding the five thousand, and to the events growing out of that miracle.

Following this mighty work, the Lord left the multitudes who were seeking "**the loaves, and were filled**" (verse 26), and crossed over the Sea of Galilee, walking upon the water. The next day the wondering crowd followed him to "**the other side of the sea**" (verse 25), and asked Him, saying, "**Rabbi, when camest thou thither?**" They had not witnessed His walking upon the water; they knew He did not enter the ship when the disciples did; they knew also that there had been "**no other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered**" (verse 22). Little wonder they marveled at His presence across the lake! It had been their purpose to "**take him by force, to make him a king**" (verse 15). But the omniscient Lord knew their hearts; He knew they were seeking the loaves and fishes — not His free salvation. And this led Him to utter another of His great discourses, this one on Himself, the Bread of Life.

Let us take a glimpse at these four portions of the chapter, all woven into the one story:

1. *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*,
6:1-14.

Three facts emphasize the Lord's deity in John's record of this miracle:

- (a) *Christ's Foreknowledge*, verse 6. He was questioning Philip **"to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do."**
- (b) *The Miracle Itself could have been performed by none other than "The mighty God."*
- (c) *Moses' Prophecy Fulfilled in Christ:*

"This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world," John 6:14; cf. Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. (John is the only one to tell us that Andrew brought the lad with the loaves and fishes to Jesus).

2. *Christ's Walking upon the Water*,
6:15-21.

Only the Creator of the universe could walk upon the sea which He had made! It is true that, as long as Peter kept his eye upon the Lord, he also walked upon the water to go to Jesus, as Matthew tells us; but Peter's walking upon the sea was only by the power of Christ; and when his faith wavered, he began to sink. Christ Jesus, the Lord, walked upon the Sea of Galilee which He had created, giving us just a little glimpse of His deity and power.

3. *Christ's Discourse on the Bread of Life*,
6:26-59.

This message of the Lord is recorded only by John, although the other three evangelists tell of Peter's great confession, which shows his response to the discourse and the truth it proclaims.

We suggest here just a few of the most striking proofs of Christ's deity established by this sermon:

- (a) *The Lord Jesus' Repeated Call to Personal Faith in Him for Salvation.*

Here are some of His words :

- ". . . everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you," 6:27.
- **"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent,"** 6:29.
- **"The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world,"** 6:33; cf. 32b.
- **"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst,"** 6:35; cf. 6:41, 48, 50, 51, 53-58.
- **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,"** 6:37. (See also verses 40, 45, 47).

(b) *The Lord's Repeated Statement That He Came Down from Heaven*, as in verse 38,

"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

(c) *The Lord Jesus' Declaration That He Will Raise the Dead*.

". . . everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day," 6:40; cf. verses 39, 44.

Throughout all of this sermon Christ repeatedly refers to the Father, saying, "**My Father**," or "**the Father**," in such a way that the multitudes who heard Him and all who read might understand that He was claiming equality with the Father in heaven. Moreover, Christ plainly stated that He had "**seen the Father**," 6:46.

4. *The Response of the Multitude to This Discourse*, 6:60-71.

Several statements growing out of this discourse also speak plainly of the deity of "**Jesus, the Son of God**":

(a) *Jesus' Omniscience*.

When some murmured at His teaching, He "**knew in himself that his disciples murmured at**" this truth, 6:61. Again, He said,

"There are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him," 6:64; cf. 6:70, 71.

(b) *Christ's Prophecy of His Ascension into Heaven*, 6:62.

(c) *The Eternal Value He Placed upon His Words*, 6:63.

When the "**Jews . . . strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?**" (6:52; cf. 6:51-58), Christ answered their unbelief, explaining this whole passage, in unmistakable terms:

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," 6:63.

And what were His words? The whole sermon which He had just preached tells us that He is the Bread of Life, the Saviour of the world! To believe His Word, to feed our souls upon Him who is the Living Bread — that is to "**eat His flesh and drink His blood**."

None but God could make that claim!

(d) *Peter's Great Confession and the Lord's Acceptance of Worship*, 6:67-69.

Testing the faith of the twelve, yet letting them know that He Himself foreknew Judas' betrayal, Christ asked them the straight question, "**Will ye also go away?**"

The fact that "**many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him**" (6:66) must have saddened His heart; for they would not let Him give them eternal life. They were seeking the loaves and fishes. There must have been sadness in His voice as He turned to the twelve for an expression of their faith. If so, Peter's response must also have brought joy to His heart of compassion,

"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," 6:68, 69.

If Christ had not been "**God manifest in the flesh,**" then He could not have received worship from His own, and at the same time have been honest and true! The fact that He did receive worship — not a few times, but often — establishes His deity; for He is "**full of grace and truth**"!

Chapters Seven and Eight

The Controversy in the Temple over the Person of Christ: Chapters seven and eight, recorded only by John, tell of the controversy in the temple at the Jewish feast of tabernacles concerning His deity. Therefore, they form a unit in themselves; yet chapter seven tells of one day's argument on the part of the unbelieving Jews and the Lord's teaching in reply; chapter eight, of a continuance of the same discussion on the following day. The feast of tabernacles lasted one week, according to the Law of Moses; and Christ went up to the temple and taught "**about the midst of the feast**" (7:14).

The controversy in the two chapters might be summarized in the questions and answers of 8:25, 42, 53, 58: "**Who art thou?**"

- "**I proceeded forth and came from God.**"
- "**Whom makest thou thyself?**"
- "**Before Abraham was, I am.**"

As we examine these chapters carefully, we are forcefully impressed with the infinite patience of the Son of God, that He kept on answering the malicious questions of the Jews, faithfully telling them over and over who He was and whence He came. We are impressed with the infinite patience of the Holy Spirit in recording these same truths repeatedly — for emphasis upon the deity of our Lord, that none need miss the plain teaching concerning the eternity of "**Jesus, the Son of God,**" His power, and His matchless love. As we try to set in array the arguments He gives to prove Christ's deity, we are impressed also with the fact that these same arguments have been given repeatedly in the chapters which have gone before.

But our God is patient and faithful, and it is like Him to make His teaching very, very plain, that **“the wayfaring man may not err therein.”**

For our convenience, we shall look at these chapters separately:

Chapter Seven:

1. *Christ’s Testimony to “His Brethren,”*
7:6-8.

The half-brothers of the Lord, sons of Joseph and Mary, did not **“believe in him”** at that time, apparently not until after His suffering and death and resurrection. When they rebuked Him about His not going up to the feast of tabernacles at the beginning of the week, He answered them with the often-repeated statement written in John,

“My time is not yet come,” 7:6, 8; cf. 7:30.

2. *Christ’s Teaching in the Temple,*
7:16-39.

- (a) *The Heaven-Sent One,* 7:16, 18, 28, 29, 33.
- (b) *The Sinless One,* 7:18.
- (c) *His Prophecy of His Return to the Father,* 7:33.
- (d) *His Prophecy concerning the Coming of the Holy Spirit,* 7:37-39.

No one but God Himself would dare to make such claims as these! That is, no one who is righteous and true, as Jesus was! And His prophecy concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit is wonderful! It is yet another call to personal faith in Christ for salvation; and it looked forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts. The Apostle John, writing many years after that Day of Pentecost, looked back to the fulfillment of the Lord’s prophecy; and guided by the Holy Spirit, added the parenthesis of verse 39.

3. *The Vain Attempts of the Jews to Take Him,*
7:30, 44-46.

Knowing full well that Christ was telling of His deity, the Jews **“sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come,”** 7:30. They **“sent officers to take him,”** 7:32; but those officers returned to the chief priests and Pharisees with the strangest answer officers of the law ever gave to their superiors.

“Never man spake like this man,” 7:46.

They must have been Roman soldiers; they had the swords and the authority of the civil powers; yet they could not touch the Son of God until His **“hour”** struck, until He voluntarily laid down His own life as an atonement for the sins of the world. What a mark of Deity! The Living Word **“spake”** such words that His bitterest enemies stood in awe of His majestic Presence!

4. *The Testimony of “Many of the People,”*
7:40.

Again we hear quoted that famous prophecy of Moses concerning the Messiah who was to come, this time from the lips of **“many of the people,”**

“Of a truth this is the Prophet,” 7:40; cf. Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.

It is significant that they did not say, *“a prophet”*; for there were many human prophets given to Israel in Old Testament times. They said, **“The Prophet.”** They knew of Moses’ promise of the Saviour to come, and recognized Him in Jesus!

Nicodemus also, though a ruler of the Jews, was bold enough to take Christ’s part and insist upon a fair trial before condemning Him. Whether he was a secret believer at that time, we do not know; but we do know, from the fact that he helped Joseph of Arimathea to bury Jesus, that he did come to believe in Him as his Messiah and Lord.

John is the only inspired writer to mention Nicodemus; but his three references to him make us know that he was saved. (See John 3:1-21; 7:50-52; 19:39, 40).

Earlier in this lesson we showed, by the names of Christ used in John, that this fourth Gospel presents also the fourfold portrait of the Lord. The last verse of chapter seven and the first of chapter eight give us another glimpse of the humility of the **“Mighty God.”**

At the close of the first day of the controversy in the temple **“every man went unto his own house.”**

But **“Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.”** He had nowhere to lay His head! Possibly, as the Son of Man, He spent the night in prayer to His Heavenly Father. Certainly He was in perfect fellowship with Him at all times! But such love is beyond human comprehension — that the eternal God should so humble Himself — for unworthy sinners!

Chapter Eight:

“And early in the morning he came again into the temple and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them,” 8:2.

Then it was that the wicked, hypocritical Jews brought the sinful woman to Jesus, **“that they might have to accuse him.”**

Again, the Lord’s majestic Person must have towered above the miserable, cunning men He faced. And with what wisdom He silenced them!

The Law of Moses demanded two witnesses; there were none! But possibly the most significant fact about this scene is:

1. His Power to Forgive Sin,
8:11.

Only God can do that! Then there is His manifestation of His love for sinners.

There is His knowledge of the wicked hearts of the woman's accusers — all manifesting infinite wisdom and infinite love.

2. Christ's Teaching in the Temple Continued — His Discourse on the Light of the World — The Eternal "I AM,"
8:12-58.

- (a) *His Claim: "I Am the Light of the World,"* 8:12.
- (b) *His Claim to Be the Life-Giver,* 8:12, 31-36, 51.
- (c) *His Claim to Be the Heaven-Sent One,* 8:14, 16, 23, 25-27, 29, 42.
- (d) *His Equality with the Father,* 8:16, 19, 28, 29, 38, 40.
- (e) *His Fulfillment of the Law of Moses in Giving Two Witnesses to His Deity — The Son and the Father,* 8:17, 18.
- (f) *His Pronouncement of Eternal Judgment upon the Unbelieving Jews,* 8:21-24, 34, 35.
- (g) *His Prophecy of His Cross,* 8:28.
- (h) *His Claim to Be Sinless,* 8:29,46, 55.
- (i) *His Claim to Be Very God, Speaking the Word of God,* 8:31, 37, 40, 45,47,51.
- (j) *His Claim to Equal Honor with the Father — even as He honored the Father, and even as the Father honored the Son,* 8:49, 50, 54.
- (k) *His Claim to Be the Eternal "I AM,"* 8:56-58.

We have already mentioned the startling significance of this claim to deity, recalling that Abraham lived two thousand years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, and remembering that the Jews knew that the Lord Jesus was telling them that He was the same Lord God who had talked to Moses from the burning bush, saying, "**I AM THAT I AM.**"

Because they knew that He claimed to be God, by applying this name to Himself,

"Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by," 8 :S9. **"His hour was not yet come!"**

Chapter Nine:

Only John records the story of Christ's healing the man born blind, furnishing yet further proof of His deity. The miracle itself could have been wrought by God alone; and besides, there are connected with it significant words of the Lord which prove who He was:

1. His Foreknowledge,
9:3.

He said to the Jews that the man had been allowed to suffer blindness **“that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”** He knew that He would give sight to the life-long sufferer. And what comfort is added to any sorrow or trouble, when God is honored thereby!

2. *The Heaven-Sent One — The Light of the World,*
9:4, 5.

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day . . . As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

3. *Christ’s Claim to Be the Son of God,*
9:35-37.

To the man whose blindness He had healed the Lord said,

“Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.”

4. *Christ’s Acceptance of Worship,*
9:38.

“And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”

There is a beautiful lesson here, which we pause a moment to mention; it is the man’s **“growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”**

- At first he recognized Jesus only as **“a man that is called Jesus”**;
- Later, as **“a prophet”**;
- Still later, as **“of God”**;

And when Jesus **“had found him,”** reviled and cast out of the synagogue because of his confession, the compassionate Saviour who **“found him”** revealed Himself to him as **“Lord . . . the Son of God.”**

How despicable, by way of contrast, are the ingratitude and cowardice of the man’s parents! But it is ever thus. **“Many are called, but few are chosen.”**

Chapter Ten:

Christ — The Good Shepherd is the theme of the Lord’s discourse, recorded only by John, in chapter ten. From beginning to end, it is filled with His declaration of His deity:

1. *Christ — The Way to Heaven,*
10:7, 9, 10.

“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep . . . I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

2. Christ — The Suffering Saviour,
10:11, 14, 15.

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep . . . I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine . . . And I lay down my life for the sheep.”

3. The Fellowship between the Father and the Son,
10:15.

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.”

4. Christ’s Prophecy concerning His “Other Sheep”
Gentiles, 10:16.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”

5. Christ’s Prophecy of His Voluntary Sacrifice and of His Bodily Resurrection,
10:17, 18.

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

Our Lord’s death was not that of a helpless victim, nor that of a martyr; it was voluntary; it was planned from all eternity; for He is **“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”** (Revelation 13:8). These words spoken by Christ Himself in John 10:17, 18 forever establish that fact, as well as His foreknowledge of all things.

6. Christ’s Answer to the Unbelieving Jews,
10:24-30.

The Lord’s accusers here were not even honest, for He had told them repeatedly who He was, whence He came, and for what purpose. Yet they dared to say unto Him,

“How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,” 10:24.

Christ’s answer is wonderful! Let us meditate long upon it, even though we can only outline it here:

(a) *Christ's Words and His Works Bore Witness to His Messiahship and Deity*, 10:25; cf. 10:34-38.

(b) *The Jews' Unbelief Proved the Unregenerate State of Their Hearts*, 10:26.

(c) *The "Sheep" of the Good Shepherd*:

(1) *Hear His voice*;

(2) *are known of Him*;

(3) *follow Him*;

(4) *receive from Him eternal life*;

(5) *are the Father's gift to the Son*;

(6) *are eternally secure in Him*, 10:27-29.

(d) *The Father and the Son Are One God*, 10:30!

Every Christian should memorize this passage — for its assurance of salvation, and for its use in winning souls to the Saviour.

How can a mere man contradict it? And yet there are thousands in professing Christendom today who teach that it is presumptuous to rest in the assurance of eternal salvation by faith through grace alone.

These words of John 10:27-30 are the voice of the eternal God! We dare not doubt Him! We dare not accuse Him of falsehood!

We dare not limit His grace by seeking to add to His free gift our own miserable, paltry works as a means of salvation!

Once more the Jews "**took up stones to stone him**," and accused Him of blasphemy, admitting that Jesus said He was "**God**," 10:31-33. Their own admission indicted them; they were without excuse, for they knew what His words meant!

Again the Lord faithfully answered their questions, practically in the same words He had used before — not once or twice, but very many times. And again, in unmistakable terms, He said,

"I am the Son of God," 10:36.

"Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand," 10:39. His hour had not yet come!

(In the quotation, "**Ye are gods**," 10:34; cf. Psalm 82:6, the word "**gods**" is used in the sense of "*rulers*," not of "*deity*," as the context of the Psalm indicates).

The chapter closes with the reassuring knowledge that "**many believed on him**," 10:42. Thus the testimony of the "**many**" who had faith in Him bore witness to the deity of "**Jesus, the Son of God**."

Chapter Eleven:

Christ's Raising Lazarus from the Dead is recorded by John alone; and, as we have seen, this fresh evidence of the deity of Christ seems to have been saved by the Holy Spirit for its special use here — to off-set the unbelief which had crept into Christendom when John wrote his Gospel.

It has been pointed out by many that, to human eyes, this seems to be the Lord's greatest miracle. Of course, all of His miracles established His deity; and "**with God all things are possible.**" But to raise from the dead a man who had been in the grave four days appears to man as possibly the greatest of the Lord's mighty works.

Once more we shall only mention briefly the highlights of this remarkable evidence of Christ's deity:

1. *Christ's Foreknowledge of the death of Lazarus, and of the miracle which He was later to perform,* 11:4, 11-14.

2. *His Claim to Deity — "I Am the Resurrection and the Life."*

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," 11:25, 26.

3. *His Acceptance of Worship from Mary and Martha.*

Both called Him "**Lord,**" saying unto Him,

"Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world . . . Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," 11:27, 32.

4. *Christ's Words to the Father,*
11:41, 42.

"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

5. *The Spoken Word of the Living Word Raised the Dead!*

When Christ raised the little daughter of Jairus, who had just died, He "**took her by the hand**" (Luke 8:54). When He raised the son of the widow of Nain, whose body was on the way to the tomb, He "**touched the bier**" (Luke 7:14). But when He raised Lazarus, who had been "**in the grave four days already,**" He merely spoke the words, "**Lazarus, come forth,**" John 11:43.

"And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go," 11:44.

Here we see the Lord of heaven commanding, by His Word; and He is obeyed. So it will be when **“all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth”** in bodily resurrection. (See John 5:28, 29).

*6. The Significant Prophecy of Caiaphas,
11:49-52.*

“And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”

Caiaphas had in mind earthly power, under the Roman Empire; but, because of his sacred office, God prophesied through him — in spite of his unbelief — to foretell the vicarious nature of the atoning death of Christ, for Gentile, as well as for Jew!

We would not leave this remarkable chapter without at least a word concerning the compassion and love of the Lord of Glory. His tears of sympathy speak for themselves!

The late Dr. F. B. Meyer calls His waiting **“two days”** after He received the message from the sisters concerning the illness of Lazarus, before He started on His journey to them, one of “love’s delays.” Because He loved them He waited. And because He waited, **“many of the Jews . . . believed on him”** when they saw the miracle. (See John 11:6, 45; 12:11, 17, 18). Because He waited, **“that the Son of God might be glorified thereby,”** **“many Jews”** have been in heaven nearly two thousand years already — and will be for all eternity! May our own sorrows and tears be **“for the glory of God”!**

Chapter Twelve:

1. Christ’s Foreknowledge of His Approaching Death — A Proof of Deity.

When Judas, the thief and traitor, objected to Mary’s anointing the Lord’s feet with **“a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly,”** worth “between nine and ten pounds sterling,” Christ once more announced His foreknowledge of His approaching death, saying,

“Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this,” 12:7.

Only the omniscient Lord could have made that statement.

*2. The Fulfillment of Two Old Testament Prophecies in Christ’s “Triumphal Entry” into Jerusalem,
12:12-16:*

(a) *The Worship of “Much People”:*

“Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord,” 12:13; cf. Psalm 118:26.

(b) *The Manner of His Official Presentation of Himself as King of Israel:*

“And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt,” 12:14, 15; cf. Zechariah 9:9.

The many fulfilled prophecies concerning our Lord’s coming into the world as **“God with us”** are an irrefutable proof of His deity. Such things were never written of mere men; but they were written concerning the Lord, centuries before they came to pass, that we might know Him when He did come — the promised Messiah and Redeemer and Lord God!

3. *The Lord’s Answer to “Certain Greeks” Who “Would See Jesus”*
12:23-36.

Only John records this remarkable passage; we select only a few excerpts from it which emphasize Christ’s deity, evidenced by His foreknowledge of His vicarious death:

“And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,” 12:23, 24.

The significance of this statement is overwhelming!

Just as the grain of wheat must **“fall into the ground and die”** before it can bring forth the harvest, even so the Son of Man had to shed His blood on Calvary’s Cross before He could **“lead many sons unto glory”** with Him.

It is a solemn thought: Christ could have gone back to heaven alone, without dying as the sinner’s Substitute; but He wanted His redeemed with Him in glory; therefore, He chose **“the way of the cross.”**

Surely He could see nothing lovely or worthy in us! Yet because of His great compassion, because of His limitless grace, He loved us enough to die for us! And heaven will be filled with a great harvest of never-dying souls throughout eternity because the Lord Jesus was willing to die!

Not only so; but He told His disciples these things before they came to pass, that they might know Him as the eternal, all-wise God.

Here are a few more of these prophecies, recorded in the passage before us:

“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name,” 12:27, 28.

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth (i.e., on the cross), will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die,” 12:31-33.

4. The Father’s Voice,
12:28-30.

Yet another wonderful proof of the deity of Christ is seen in the Father’s answer to the Son’s troubled words, which we have just read. The sinless Son of Man was facing the agony of separation from His Father for the first time in all eternity, to be experienced when His holy Father had to turn His face away from His beloved Son when the Son **“became sin for us”** (II Corinthians 5:21).

“He who knew no sin” in Himself was to become a curse for us; and His own holy soul shrank from that **“cup of suffering.”** Only John records this conversation between the Father and the Son, which we read a moment ago. Then the evangelist tells us the Lord’s own explanation of why the Father spoke from heaven, that we might know that Jesus is God! When He said, **“Father, glorify thy name,”** then the Father answered, saying,

“I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

“The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.”

How faithfully God, the Father, has made known to us the eternal glories of His Son, our Saviour!

5. Isaiah’s Prophecy of Israel’s Rejection of Christ Fulfilled,
12:37-40.

Two prophecies from Isaiah foretelling Israel’s rejection of her Messiah are quoted by John in verses 38 and 40. The first of these introduces the wonderful fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which graphically portrays the suffering of the Lord Jesus for sinners. It is the voice of the discouraged prophet, discouraged because his people would not put their faith in the promised Redeemer,

“Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

And being a prophet, looking down the ages, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Isaiah saw that Israel would still be unbelieving when the Lord Jesus was upon earth, for,

“though he had done so many miracles before them,” John explains, **“yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet”** which we have just quoted **“might be fulfilled.”**

Then John adds the second of these two prophecies, showing that, because of Israel’s hardness of heart and rejection of her Messiah and Lord, their darkened hearts were yet further blinded. It is ever so; when man deliberately turns his back upon God, his spiritual darkness deepens.

“Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them” (John 12:39, 40; Isaiah 6:10).

6. Isaiah’s Vision of “His (Jesus’) Glory”
12:41; cf. Isaiah 6:1-8.

John’s comment in 12:41 is startling!

Having quoted the prophecy from Isaiah 6:10 concerning Israel’s unbelief, he adds the explanation that the prophet had written those words after having seen **“his glory.”** Whose glory? The glory of the Lord Jesus! And we need only turn to Isaiah 6:1-10 to read one of the most remarkable of all the Old Testament descriptions of the glory of God. Then what is John saying here? Simply this: That Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus, who is God! And He saw **“His glory”** some seven hundred years before Bethlehem’s manger!

When Isaiah had this vision of the Lord, he said plainly, **“I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple . . . And one (of the seraphim) cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory”** (Isaiah 6:1-3).

Seven hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Isaiah saw the thrice-holy God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and John said that the God whom the prophet saw was the Lord Jesus! How could the Holy Spirit make more plain the eternal deity of Christ?

7. Christ’s Last Public Claim to Deity, as Recorded by John,
12 :44-50.

In the closing words of this twelfth chapter of John we read the Lord’s last public declaration of His deity, as told by **“the beloved disciple.”** And in these words He said again that He was the One **“sent”** by the Father to give light and life everlasting to sinners.

Chapter Thirteen:

With chapter thirteen we enter upon the Lord’s deeper teaching for His own, spoken only to His disciples. The scene opens with the last Passover, but the details recorded in the Synoptic Gospels are omitted here.

John does not even tell of the institution of the Lord's Supper, to take the place of the Passover feast; but he does record yet other details omitted by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. For example, only John describes the scene wherein Christ washed the disciples' feet; and only he tells us of the "**new commandment**," that we "**love one another**," 13:34.

After the supper, Judas "**went immediately out: and it was night**," 13:30. Surely it was night in his sin-darkened soul! And as he went to lead the Lord's enemies to the scene of the betrayal, Christ gave His farewell discourse to the eleven who loved Him. (See chapters fourteen, fifteen and sixteen).

Chapter fourteen seems to have been spoken in the room where the Passover supper had been eaten. It closes with the words, "**Arise, let us go hence**."

And on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane the beautiful farewell message was continued. This scene is climaxed by the Great High Priestly Prayer of the Lord, recorded in chapter seventeen. And in these four chapters — fourteen to seventeen — we have some of the most precious truths that ever fell from the lips of our Lord and Saviour.

As we remember that only John records them, we realize something of their significance, placed as they are by the Holy Spirit in this Gospel which lays emphasis upon the exaltation of the Lord Jesus to His rightful place as the eternal God. That He should manifest such love, as that evidenced in these four chapters — such love for us, whom He calls "**his own**," unlovely and unworthy though we are — that He should manifest such love, warms our hearts and fills our souls with worship for such a Saviour!

Before we consider the farewell discourse, let us scan the pages of chapter thirteen for proofs of Christ's deity. We can only mention them in passing:

1. His Foreknowledge:

- (a) "**That His Hour Was Come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father**," 13:1, 31-33.
- (b) "**That the Father Had Given All Things into His Hands**," 13:3.
- (c) "**That He Was Come from God, and Went to God**," 13:3.
- (d) *That Judas Would Betray Him*, 13:10, 11, 18, 21-27.
- (e) *That Peter Would Deny Him*, 13:38.

2. His Acceptance of Worship.

Seven times in this chapter the title "**Lord**" is applied to Christ; and always He accepts it as His by right of His deity (See 13:6, 9, 13, 14, 25, 36, 37).

3. His Claim to Power to Cleanse from Sin.

His words in verses 10 and 11 are significant:

“He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, hut is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.” Having been cleansed **“once for all”** from the penalty of sin by faith in the shed blood of Christ, the redeemed child of God yet needs the daily cleansing from the defilement of sin, foreshadowed in the Jewish tabernacle by the washing of hands and feet at the brazen laver.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” (I John 1:9).

It is the Lord Jesus Christ who cleanses us from the penalty of our sin **“once for all”** when His own Holy Spirit regenerates our souls, and we are born again. And it is Christ who cleanses us from the defilement of daily sins **“with the washing of water by the word,”** Ephesians 5:26. And because only God can forgive sin, therefore Christ is God!

4. His Application of Old Testament Prophecy to Himself, 13:18.

A thousand years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, David wrote in Psalm 41:9 the words quoted by the Lord in John 13:18 and applied to Himself, concerning the betrayal by Judas,

“He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”

Then the Lord added the significant words:

“Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may know that I am . . .”

(The word *“he”* is in italics; and is, therefore, not in the Greek language but is supplied by the translators to add clarity to the verse).

5. His Claim to Be One with the Father, 13:20, 31, 32.

6. His Divine Authority in Teaching, 13:34, 35.

“Love is the fulfilling of the law.” And the **“new commandment”** was given in the voice of authority by the Son of God Himself. He taught not **“as one of the scribes,”** but as the One whose right it is to give commandments, as very God!

Chapters Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen:

Since chapters fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen form one continuous discourse, let us consider them as a unit. It is difficult not to dwell at length upon these familiar, much loved words that are our Lord’s farewell message to the eleven disciples who loved Him, as well as to us today.

But we must pause only long enough to call attention to some of the striking points of emphasis upon His deity:

1. *Christ's Gift of the Peace of God, Spoken to Troubled Hearts,*
14:1, 27; 16:33.

Only His loved ones can know what the Lord meant by these wonderful words! And only eternity will reveal the comfort they have given to troubled hearts for many centuries! They carry with them the authority of the everlasting God, as well as the comfort of the sympathetic Saviour!

2. *His Claim to Be One with God, the Father,*
14:1, 7-12, 20, 24; 15:1, 2, 8, 15, 21, 23, 24; 16:3, 5, 10, 15, 16, 25-28, 32.

We quote just one of these often-repeated truths:

“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” 14:9.

3. *His Prophecy of His Ministry on Behalf of His Own during This Church Age:*

“In my Father’s house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing,” 14:2, 15:5.

Later, in the seventeenth chapter, we learn the kind of intercession our Great High Priest is making even now for us at the **“throne of grace.”**

4. *His Prophecy of His Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Return for His Own,*
14:1-6, 12, 18, 28; 16:16-33.

Again, this foreknowledge manifests His deity.

5. *His Claim to Be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, as Well as the True Vine,*
14:6, 19; 15: 1, 5.

Again we are reminded of John 1:51, where the Lord told Nathanael that He Himself is “Jacob’s Ladder,” the Way to heaven and God. In 14:6; 15:1, 5 we have two of the seven uses by the Lord of the great **“I AM,”** wherein He applied this name to Himself.

6. *His Promise to Answer the Believer’s Prayer:*

(a) *To the Father,* 15:16; 16:23.

(b) *In Jesus’ Name,* 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26.

(c) *For God’s Glory,* 14:13.

(d) *If the Believer Abides in Christ, and His Words Abide in the Believer,* 15:7.

7. *The Divine Authority of His Teachings throughout the entire discourse.*

8. *Christ’s Promise of the Holy Spirit:*

(a) *To Be Sent by the Father:*

- (1) In answer to the Son's prayer, 14:16;
- (2) in the name of the Son, 14:26.

(b) *To Be Sent by the Son from the Father*, 15:26; 16:7. Therefore, Father and Son are One!

(c) *To Be "Another Comforter,"* 14:16, 18, 26; 15:26; 16:7.

(d) *To Abide with Believers and in Them Forever*, 14:16, 17.

(e) *To Be Recognized as the Spirit of Truth*, 14:17; 15:26; 16:13:

(1) Unknown to the Christ-rejecting world.

(2) Known by believers in Jesus.

(f) *To Teach Believers the Word of the Lord Jesus*, 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15.

(g) *To Reprove the World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment*, 16:8-11.

9. *Old Testament Prophecy Fulfilled in Christ:*

"They hated me without a cause," 15:25; cf. Psalm 35:19; 69:4.

10. *The Testimony of the Disciples to Christ's Deity Accepted by Him*, 16:30, 31.

(a) *That He knew all things.*

(b) *That He came "forth from God."*

Chapter Seventeen:

Earlier in these studies we called attention to the fact that in our Lord's intercessory prayer for His own, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, He addresses the Father as an Equal. It would seem impossible to express the co-equality, co-eternity, and co-existence of the Father and the Son in more forceful language than that before us in this wonderful chapter.

It has been suggested that here, as it were, our Great High Priest is in the Holy of Holies, interceding for His blood-bought children. He is doing that and more; for the passage opens with a group of declarative statements concerning the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son, and their eternal purpose to redeem the lost.

Let us select some of the most striking of these proofs of the deity of the Lord Jesus:

1. *The Frequent Use of the Term "Father" in the Unique Sense Which Only the Son Could Claim,*

17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25.

2. *The Lord's Petition That He Might Be Glorified as the Son Who Had Glorified the Father,*

17:1, 4, 5.

3. *The Son's Statement of the Purpose, for Which the Father Sent Him into the World — to give eternal life to those the Father had given Him, 17:2-4.*

4. *The Statement That to Have Eternal Life Is to Know the Father and the Son — two Persons of the one Triune God! 17:3.*

5. *The Lord's Petition for Restoration to His Eternal Glory, which He had with the Father "before the world was," 17:5, 24.*

Not only do we find these irrefutable claims of the Lord Jesus to eternal deity, but throughout this prayer for His redeemed He is talking to His Father as an Equal. One with the Father from all eternity, He was sent by the Father, and was now returning to the Father, taking with Him "**many sons unto glory**" (Hebrews 2:10).

The wonder of it is that this is the kind of prayer our Lord Jesus is praying for us even now at "**the throne of grace**"; and that verse 20 includes every saved soul throughout this church age:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

Our Great High Priest "**ever liveth to make intercession**" for us who love Him! (See Hebrews 7:25).

(For a beautiful analysis of the chapter, we suggest the footnotes of the *Scofield Reference Bible*).

Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen:

John's record of the suffering and death of Christ gives undeniable proof of His deity, providing fresh evidence that the suffering Saviour was none other than the eternal God:

1. *Christ's Foreknowledge Again Revealed.*

"Jesus . . . knowing all things that should come upon him . . . went forth" to meet Judas and his wicked companions. (See John 18:4; cf. 19:28). Not waiting to be taken prisoner, He voluntarily allowed His enemies to lead Him away to be crucified.

2. *His Majesty and Power in the Presence of His Cowering Enemies.*

As the Lord "**went forth**" to meet His enemies, a miraculous thing happened, mentioned only by John. After He had three times said to them, "**I am**" — the word "*he*" is in italics; and, therefore, is not in the Greek — then "**they went backward, and fell to the ground**" (18:6). Some supernatural manifestation of His glory and majesty overpowered them, not only proving His deity, but also proving that He had the power to save Himself from the cross, had He so willed it.

3. The Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy in Christ's Suffering and Death.

(a) Crucified — Not Stoned!

While there is no direct quotation from the Old Testament prophecy in John 18:31, 32; yet the statement here illustrates how God wrought, that the prophecies might be fulfilled. Moreover, the passage shows the fulfillment of the prediction of the Lord Jesus.

If the Roman government had not forbidden by law the Jews' execution of their accused, they would have stoned Christ to death, rather than crucify Him. They later stoned Stephen; and that was according to Jewish custom in executions. But God had said through David in the twenty-second Psalm, to say nothing of other prophecies, that Christ was to be crucified.

That Psalm was written a thousand years B.C. At that time crucifixion was not even known.

But God knows all that the future holds; and He wrote the manner of Christ's death in the Old Testament, in order that, when the Lord Jesus was crucified, we might know that He was the promised Redeemer. Such things were not written of a mere man!

(b) "No Fault in Him!"

Three times Pilate told the Jews that Christ was guiltless; and in His sinlessness, acknowledged by the Roman governor, Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled, in which he said, "**He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth,**" Isaiah 53:9; John 18:38; 19:4, 6.

(c) The Unresisting Lamb of God!

When "**Jesus gave him (Pilate) no answer,**" John 19:9, another prophecy from Isaiah 53:7 was fulfilled,

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

(d) "Numbered with the Transgressors,"

Isaiah 53:12,

Our Lord was crucified between two thieves, John 19:18.

(e) "For My Vesture They Did Cast Lots"

John 19:24; Psalm 22:18.

Thus the Roman soldiers, pagan and cruel, were fulfilling prophecy, of which they doubtless knew nothing!

(f) ***“They Gave Me Also . . . Vinegar to Drink”***

Psalm 69:21; John 19:29.

(g) ***“A Bone of Him Shall Not Be Broken”***

John 19:36; Exodus 12:46; Num. 9:12; Psalm 34:20.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is wonderful, indeed!

“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away,” John 19:31; cf. Deuteronomy 21:23.

In other words the Jews got permission from Pilate to break the legs of the three on the crosses, so they would die quickly; for death by crucifixion was a slow torture. The soldiers did break the legs of the two thieves; but not those of Christ; for already He had voluntarily given His Spirit into the Father’s keeping. Had He not said, **“No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself”?** And **“these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broken,”** John 19:36. There is no explanation of such a supernatural circumstance, other than that it was so ordered by God to prove that **“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.”**

(h) ***“Pierced!”***

“One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side . . .” John 19:34.

“And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced,” John 19:37; Zechariah 12:10; Revelation 1:7; cf. Psalm 22:16.

(i) ***“Buried with the Rich.”***

It is in Matthew 27:57 that we read that Joseph of Arimathea was **“rich.”** But all the evangelists tell of his going to Pilate to beg the body of Jesus, and of his burying it in his own new tomb. In this act he was fulfilling yet another prophecy from Isaiah 53:9, which tells us that the Lord was to be buried **“with the rich in his death.”**

We rejoice to know that Nicodemus loved the Lord, for he brought sweet spices with which to prepare the body of Jesus for burial. Only John mentions this ruler of the Jews, but in his second reference to him, **“the beloved disciple”** tells us that Nicodemus took the Lord’s part in the Jewish council. And here he came out boldly for Him, to prepare His body for burial. (See John 3:1-21; 7:50-52; 19:39, 40).

4. *Christ’s Authoritative Answers to His Accusers.* From John 18:20-23, 33-38; 19:11 we quote here just a brief excerpt from our Lord’s plain statements to His accusers, words in which He asserted His deity:

“My kingdom is not of this world . . . Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”

*5. The Jews’ Own Admission That Jesus Claimed to Be God,
19:7,*

“We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”
Therefore, they were without excuse!

6. Significant Omissions from John’s Gospel.

The details omitted from this fourth Gospel, in connection with the suffering and death of Christ are significant. To include them would have been contrary to the purpose of the Holy Spirit in John’s record. For example, there is no description of the Gethsemane experience, with the thrice-repeated prayer to the Father. There is nothing about the **“sweat as it were great drops of blood,”** the **“strong crying and tears,”** the ministering angel, the Lord’s seeking the human companionship of Peter, James, and John. All of these details emphasize the humanity of the suffering Saviour; whereas John is portraying the Lord of glory! Instead of Christ’s seeking human companionship, He is seen protecting His own from the Jews who were about to crucify Him (18:8).

Likewise, John omits the compelling of Simon to bear Jesus’ cross **“after him,”** the mocking taunts of the angry mob, the supernatural darkness, the forsaken cry, the rending of the veil of the temple. Each of these details has its place in the other Gospels, but in John we behold the unveiling of **“The mighty God”!**

7. The Voice of Triumph.

When the Lord Jesus cried out, saying, **“It is finished,”** He was proclaiming to all His universe, doubtless with a shout of victory, that His redemptive work was accomplished. With the authority of the God He was, He declared that Satan was forever vanquished. All who would believe in Him for salvation from sin were forever set free from Satan and sin and death!

It is in keeping with the purpose of this fourth Gospel that this shout of triumph should be recorded here. (See John 19:30). Only John records it.

The only other sayings of Christ from the cross, quoted by John, are found only here: The Lord’s loving provision for Mary; and the words, **“I thirst.”** (See John 19:26, 27, 28). We are told that extreme thirst is one of the agonies of the physical suffering of crucifixion; and this, too, was prophesied in Psalm 22:15.

Surely an honest seeker after truth must admit that, even in His passion, the Lord Jesus is portrayed in John as the eternal Son of the eternal God!

Chapters Twenty and Twenty-One:

Much of the material of the last two chapters of John is not found elsewhere in the Word of God; for example, the details of the visit of Peter and John to the empty tomb; the risen Lord's appearance first to Mary Magdalene; the story of "doubting Thomas," following the Lord's appearance to some of the disciples; His appearance eight days later, Thomas being present; and the stated purpose of John's Gospel, 20:30, 31.

Then all of chapter twenty-one, which is an epilogue to the whole book, is recorded only in John. It includes: The risen Lord's appearance to the seven by the Sea of Tiberias, also called the Sea of Galilee, and the miraculous draught of fishes; His three-fold question to Peter, saying, "**Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?**" His prophecy of Peter's crucifixion in his old age; His answer concerning Peter's query about how John should die; and a final verse suggestive of the infinite scope of Christ's Person and work.

All of these events bear testimony to the deity and power and glory of the risen Lord Jesus! Let us look briefly at some of these "**many infallible proofs**" that "**Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God**":

1. *The Empty Tomb* bore silent witness to the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and His resurrection was the climax of all the proofs of His deity.
2. *The Linen Clothes lying in order in the empty tomb*, with the "**napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself**" — such order refutes the false story of the Jews that His body was stolen away by His disciples. The grave clothes were still there! They were there in order, just like an empty shell, as it were; the Lord had risen! He had no further need of grave clothes!
3. *The Appearance of the Angels* added yet further proof of the supernatural character of Christ's bodily resurrection.
4. *The Lord's Appearance to Mary Magdalene*, and her testimony to His resurrection before the disciples, furnishes additional evidence of His resurrection from the dead.
5. *The Lord's Appearance to the Disciples, Thomas Being Absent* is convincing. On this occasion He "**shewed them his hands, and his side,**" 20:20. The nail prints and the wounded side proved the reality of His resurrection body. Here also John called Him "**the Lord,**" 20:20; and once more the risen Christ spoke of His having been "**sent by the Father,**" 20:21.
6. *His Appearance to the Disciples, Thomas Being "with Them,"* is wonderful. Again He showed the wounds in his hands and side.
7. *The Testimony of Thomas*, 20:28, is overwhelming.

"My Lord and my God!"

The Lord accepted these titles of deity — a proof that He was God!

8. *The Purpose of John's Gospel*, 20:30, 31. We spoke of the stated purpose of John early in our study of this fourth Gospel; but it is so important and so basic that we quote it again here in full. It speaks for itself:

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

9. *His Appearance to the Seven Disciples by the Sea of Galilee*. Here He manifested His power to withhold His identity, as also He had done when He appeared to Mary Magdalene; and His power to work a mighty miracle. Again, John called Him **“the Lord,”** 21:12.

10. *Peter's Testimony to the Omniscience of Christ*, 21:17,

“Lord, thou knowest all things.”

11. *The Lord's Prophecy of Peter's Crucifixion*, 21:18, 19. In other words, He foretold that Peter's hands would be stretched forth on a cross for Jesus' sake.

12. *The Divine Authority of the Lord's Answer to Peter concerning John*, 21:20-23. In this connection we observe that the Lord's closing words in this Gospel have to do with His promise to return for His own. There is no record here of His ascension; for, as the omnipresent Lord, He is still **“in the midst”** of those who love Him.

13. *The Infinite Scope of the Person and Work of Christ*, 21:25:

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”

With these closing words the Holy Spirit leaves us with a feeling of awe as we continue to ponder over the matchless portrait of **“Jesus, the Son of God,”** which we have been beholding throughout these sacred pages. No words can fully describe Him; no book can tell all about Him. We shall have to wait until we see Him in His uncreated glory before we can fully know the wonder of His Person and the marvel of His grace! Yea, doubtless throughout eternity we shall still be ever learning more and more about the **“power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing”** of our wonderful Lord! (See Revelation 5:12).

~ end of chapter 21 ~

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