Jesus Christ the Eternal Son of God as Seen in John's Gospel: A Radio Message

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In our former studies we have seen that Matthew presents the Lord Jesus as the King of Israel, the Heir to David’s throne, and the covenant Heir to Abraham’s land. In Matthew we saw that He is the One referred to in Jeremiah 23:5: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a KING shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” In the Gospel according to Mark, we saw Him presented as the perfect, humble Servant of Jehovah, fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah 3:8: “Behold, I will bring forth my SERVANT the

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Branch." In Luke's Gospel, we saw Him portrayed as the perfect Son of Man, fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah 6:12: "Behold the MAN whose name is The Branch." And in John's Gospel, which is the study before us this morning, we find our Lord Jesus Christ presented as the eternal Son of the eternal God, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 4:2: "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious."

He is also seen in the Gospel according to John in the character represented by the flying eagle, the fourth living one connected with the throne of God and portrayed in Revelation 4. The four living ones were seen by John "in the midst of the throne"—the place where only Deity can dwell. The first was like a lion, representing Christ in His kingly character. The second was like an ox, representing Him as serving man. The third had a face of a man, speaking of the perfect humanity of Jesus. And the fourth was like the flying eagle, the bird that makes the heavens its home, representing Christ as the Lord of glory, the eternal Son of the eternal God.

There was never a time when the message of John's Gospel, setting forth as it does the deity of Christ, was more timely than it is now. On every hand we hear the deity of Christ assailed, and His humanity emphasized to the exclusion of His deity. A study of the Gospel according to John will make clear to any earnest seeker after truth that Jesus is more than a man. He is God incarnate. As Christians we are glad of every opportunity of reaffirming our faith in the eternal deity of Christ our Saviour.

Before we turn to the text itself, let us look at three of the great prophecies concerning that Babe of Bethlehem, written hundreds of years before the incarnation. In Isaiah 9:6 the Spirit of God spoke through the prophet the following words: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Here He is declared to be the mighty God and the everlasting Father. Then, too, let us note that while the text says, "A child is born," it also adds, "A son is given." How carefully the Spirit of God has selected words in describing this wonderful Son who became God incarnate at Bethlehem.

Now let us turn to Micah 5:2 where we find a similar prophecy: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." That statement could be made only of a divine Person.

Let us turn again to Zechariah 13:7 and read the following: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." The expression my fellow means my equal; and the prophecy points on to the
crucifixion of a Shepherd whom God declares to be His equal.

These are only a few of the many prophecies in the Old Testament Scriptures that set forth the eternal deity, as well as the humanity of that One who was born in Bethlehem's manger.

Now let us turn to the text itself and look at a few of the things recorded in this Gospel:

In Chapter 1 Christ is portrayed as the eternal God made flesh. Please note that John records no genealogy, either through Joseph or Mary. How could he? The One whose goings forth had been from everlasting to everlasting could have no genealogy! It was fitting that Matthew should give His legal genealogy, for in that Gospel he was presenting Christ as the Heir to David's throne. It was also fitting that Luke should record His genealogy, for he was portraying Jesus as the Son of Man, with a real body that came from God. But John is led by the Spirit to omit not only His genealogy, but all reference to His childhood.

John begins his Gospel with the majestic statement: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Three things are said of Christ here: first, He is called "the Word"; second, He "was with God"; and third, "the Word was God." Here is the Spirit's affirmation of the essential deity of the Person referred to. All this is a great mystery. How Christ can be the revelation of God, be with God, and yet be God Himself revealed, is something that is beyond our human understanding. It is not contrary to reason; it is above it. One day we shall understand this, as well as other mysteries. What is here stated, we receive with unquestioning faith.

The name, The Word, given to Christ is very significant. A word is the incarnation of a thought. I have in my mind a thought, but others do not know its nature until I clothe that thought in words. This is precisely what Jesus, the Word, has done. He has made God known to man. We are told that "no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18), or as it may be freely translated, "He hath spoken Him out." As a word is the incarnation of a thought and the means of the communication of a thought, Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the unknown God and the means by which the nature and the message of the unknown God are communicated to man.

The following question then arises: Was God not known before Jesus came? The answer is: Before Christ came, little was known of God, even by the angels that stood in His presence. The existence of God was known, for the Psalmist says: "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1). The power of God was known, for the universe revealed that fact. His holiness was also known, but His great heart of love and kindness toward guilty man was not known until the incarnation and the death of
Jesus Christ. Would you see the heart of the eternal God revealed? Look at Jesus, for there is God unveiled. He is the “Word.” How forcibly this truth is pressed upon the heart as one looks over this world today, especially at those regions where Jesus is not known! Nature in India is seen in all its glory. What flowers, what lakes, what rivers, what mountains! And yet sin is there, and darkness, and death, and ignorance of God, until the people of India hear the name of Jesus.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God” (John 1:1). This second statement denotes the separate personality of the Lord Jesus as the second member of the Godhead. It is not stated that “He was in God” as an idea in His mind, but that He was “with God.”

“And the Word was God.” How emphatically is the Deity of Christ set forth here!

Then again, the Holy Ghost identifies the Son of God with the great Creator of Genesis 1:1 in the following statement: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1). Here also is the eternal deity of the Son of God affirmed. The One that we hear speaking in Genesis 1, saying, “Let there be light,” was none other than Jesus Christ before His incarnation.

The incarnation itself is referred to in John 1:14, where we read the following: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” The expression, the Word became flesh, refers to His taking upon Himself a form that He did not possess previously. He did not cease to be God, but He also became man. This is clearly illustrated in Philippians 2:6, 7: “Who, being in the form of God ... took upon him the form of a servant.” Let us note that the nature of Christ was not changed, but just the form; and so we have the expression, “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14). Think of it! For thirty-three and one-half years, the eternal God “tabernacled” among men. In other words, He pitched His tent here among the people whom He came into the world to save. How marvelous all this is! The wonder of it will fill our hearts throughout the eternal ages.

Chapter 1 closes with a testimony to His omnipresence which called forth from Nathanael an affirmation concerning Christ’s deity. In verse 48 Jesus said, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” Nathanael’s answer to this was, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God.” In verse 51 Jesus declares Himself to be the anti-type of the ladder that Jacob saw set up on earth and reaching to the throne of God, with the angels ascending and descending upon it. Only John records these statements of Jesus.

In Chapter 2 we see Christ, the Creator, performing the first miracle of His earthly ministry, turn-
ing the water into wine at the marriage of Cana of Galilee. Only John records this, and he does so because it is a creative act. Thus he identifies Jesus Christ, the performer of the miracle, with the Creator of Genesis 1:1. The chapter closes with a reference to Christ’s omniscience: “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 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” (John 2:23-25). Bring this statement into the light of 1 King 8:39, and you will see what a convincing proof it is of Christ’s deity. Christ could read the hearts of men. He knew what was in man, and this is knowledge that only God possesses.

In Chapter 3 Christ is the One ever present. Here we have the conversation that our Lord had with Nicodemos, and in it He asserts His omnipresence. He says, “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (3:13). Christ declares that He is in heaven even while He is on earth. This is an attribute that belongs alone to deity.

In Chapter 4 the Lord’s omniscience is again emphasized. He reveals to the woman of Samaria who He is. He does so by making known to her that there is nothing in her past history that is not disclosed to Him. “For thou hast lived with five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly” (John 4:18). And the woman goes on her way to the city and says: “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (John 4:29). In this chapter He is also the One who gives “living water.”

In Chapter 5 He is seen as the life-giving One. Here we find His marvelous exposition concerning life, and He makes the following bold statement: “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them (giveth them life); even so the Son quickeneth whom he will (also giveth life to whom he will)” (John 5:21). This is an utterance, my friends, that He could never have made if He were not co-equal with God. All the things recorded in chapter 5 were clearly understood by the Jews to refer to His co-equality with God, because we read that “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” (John 5:18).

In Chapter 6 the Lord Jesus is the Bread of Life. In His great sermon on this theme He declares Himself to be “the bread of God.” “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). In verse 68 of chapter 6 He is declared to have the “words of eternal life.” This sermon on the living bread followed the feeding
of the five thousand. The miraculous feeding of the multitude is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; but only John gives the discourse that followed, emphasizing throughout the essential deity of Jesus Christ.

In Chapter 7 He is the Water of Life, imparting to those who drink of Him a perennial fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. Look at the following: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37, 38). How wonderfully this statement illustrates the divine sufficiency of Christ!

In Chapter 8 He is the Light of the World, and says of Himself: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Only a divine Person could say this of Himself. In this chapter He is also the great "I AM." In verse 57, we find the question asked Him: "Hast thou seen Abraham?" to which He answered: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." That I AM takes us back to Exodus 3 where Moses beheld the bush that was burned but not consumed. Jehovah spoke to Moses out of the bush and revealed Himself as the great "I AM." "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14). In other words, He is the self-existent One, for that is the meaning of the name. And in John 8:58 the Lord Jesus takes unto Himself that very name, which is a declaration that He and the "I AM" of the Old Testament are one.

We find the Lord Jesus ringing the changes of that name all through the book of John: "I am the bread of life"; "I am the light of the world"; "I am the door"; "I am the Good Shepherd"; "I am the resurrection and the life"; "I am the way"; "I am the true vine." And in Chapter 18, where we have recorded the scene in Gethsemane with the rabble coming to lay hold on Him, He asks: "Whom seek ye?" They said: "Jesus of Nazareth." He said, "I am." The Authorized Version has added a word that is not in the original, and makes it read, "I am he." But you will note that the word he is in italics, indicating that it was not found in the original Greek. Jesus said "I am," and that name had power to cause those men to fall backward to the ground. It is no wonder that Chapter 8 closes with an account of an attempt on the part of the Jews to stone Him for blasphemy.

In Chapter 9 Christ meets a blind man, and after healing him says: "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. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him" (John 9:35-38). Please note that Jesus accepts his worship, which He could not
have done if He had been anything less than deity; for God’s Word is explicit: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Luke 4:8).

In Chapter 10 Christ is revealed as the Good Shepherd, and among other things, He says: “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” (John 10:17, 18). No mere man could have made such a claim. Moreover, this claim is increasingly emphasized in verses 28 and 30. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand... I and my Father are one.”

In Chapter 11 He is seen as the Resurrection and the Life. Here we have the story of the most wonderful miracle Christ performed. Only John records this. Lazarus is dead; he has been in his grave for four days; and putrefaction has already set in. But Jesus declares: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). The eternal Word then speaks: “Lazarus, come forth,” and from Him who is Life there goes forth life into that dead body.

In Chapter 12:32 Jesus makes the wonderful statement: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

In Chapter 13:13 is another amazing statement that He could never have made, had He been less than God: “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.”

In Chapter 14:1-4 He links Himself with the Father: “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” In this same chapter He says to Philip, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” He also dares say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

In Chapter 15 He declares that He is the Vine through whom all the forces of everlasting life flow into the hearts of those that believe on Him.

In Chapter 16 His co-equality with the Father is again emphasized. “All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:15). In this same chapter He is the One that sends the Holy Ghost. He says: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7).

In Chapter 17 we find Him speaking to God as One who is His equal. It is worthy of notice that Jesus is never seen praying in the Gospel according to John. This fact is obscured in our translation. But the Greek word translated pray in John is a different word from that so translated in the other Gospels. The Greek word in John translated pray means to speak to one who is his equal. This we find
illustrated in John 17:24 where Jesus says: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.”

In Chapter 18 and 19 we have recorded the passion of the Son of God. It is helpful to note the things that John has omitted in connection with His sufferings which the other Evangelists have recorded. There is no record here of angels ministering unto Him; no reference to Simon of Cyrene who was compelled to carry His cross; no record of that strange cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” How could there be references to these things in the Gospel that portrays Jesus as the eternal Son of the eternal God? There is, however, recorded in connection with His passion that event already referred to which demonstrates His power. He reveals Himself as the I AM to those who come to take Him. He flashes forth for a moment His Shekinah Glory, and the rabble go backward and fall to the ground. Only John records that event, and we can readily understand the reason why. What an illustration that is of His former statement: “No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18).

After the resurrection, there is no account of the Lord’s eating food; for, as the Son of God, He does not need any. It is right and proper that Luke should record the account of His eating broiled fish, to prove that His resurrection body was real, because Luke is dealing with His humanity. John omits this event because in this Gospel Jesus is seen as the Son of God.

Let us now look at the following: “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” (John 20:30, 31). Here the purpose of this book is clearly stated: Jesus is the Son of God, and those who believe—just simply believe—on Him with the heart have eternal life through His name.

If you turn away from Him, you turn away from the avenue of life; you turn away from the way to heaven. Have you ever knelt at His feet and said as Thomas did, “My Lord and my God”? If not, do so right now. Get down by the side of the radio and open your heart’s door to the King of Glory.

I am so glad that Jesus is God. When I see Him blessing little children, I see God doing it. When I hear Him saying to a fallen woman, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more,” I hear God talking; and again, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,” I know that I hear God’s invitation; for God has unveiled Himself in the person of His Son.

You cannot do anything for your salvation, my brother. All that you can do is to believe the great
work that the God-Man did in your behalf. John is
the only one of the Evangelists who records the
triumphant statement of Jesus: "It is finished." Has
that wondrous cry gripped your heart? The work
of salvation is finished, and God invites you to come
and believe it.

Sometime ago I went to see a man who was slowly
dying of creeping paralysis. When I asked if He were
a Christian, he began telling me that he was a Pres­
byterian, that he had been a good father, that he
had paid his debts, and that he felt that God would
not be hard on him. I said, "My dear man, you are
going the cart before the horse. These things will
not save a man." He asked me, "What will?" I
turned to John's Gospel and explained to him the
significance of the words, "It is finished." I told him
that was the cry of the God-Man, who had his
sins, my sins, the sins of the world rolled on
Him, that the debt might be paid. With the eye
of faith that man looked to Calvary and simply
believed the story; and believing, he passed from
death into life.

Have you ever done that my brother? If not,
do so today, according this salvation offered by
Him who said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He
that heareth my word, and believeth on him that
sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come
into condemnation; but is passed from death unto
life" (John 5:24).