The UNVEILED GLORIES of CHRIST
the Eternal Son of God

In the Gospel
According to John

by

LOUIS T. TALBOT
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THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES
558 South Hope Street
Los Angeles 17, California
My beloved Radio Listeners:

This little booklet goes to you with love and appreciation for your faithful attendance in my radio class. Some day I trust to have more time to develop these lessons into verse-by-verse studies but this will have to suffice for now. I trust these few thoughts on the Gospel of John will stimulate you to personal study until you possess the book, and the book possesses you. And more than that, may the Author, the eternal Son of God Himself, capture your heart and life for eternity.

Ever yours in Him,

Louis T. Talbot
Your Radio Pastor

Los Angeles, Calif.

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In the Gospel according to John

By LOUIS T. TALBOT

Now will you please open your Bibles to the Gospel according to John? We are going to begin our study in this wonderful book. I do not know any book in the Bible that has been used as extensively to lead souls to Christ as this book of John. There are about twenty verses in this Gospel, such as John 3:16, John 5:24, and others, which have been employed in winning souls to the Saviour more than any other portions of the Word of God. So if God will show us this book, as we go through it, and give us an insight into its teaching; if God will give us a greater knowledge of this Gospel, perhaps we shall have the great joy of leading more people to Christ than ever before, through the study of this book. So let us ask the Lord as we go into it to make the book more precious to us, and at the same time, to teach us how to make use of it in bringing others to a knowledge of Him.

Now the purpose of the book of John, as we shall see in a verse at the end of the book, is to prove that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, and that God sent His own Son into the world to die so that men might be saved just simply by believing on Him. That is the greatest truth of the Gospel of John. It differs from the other three Gospels, which are called the Synoptic Gospels, because of the general view they give of the birth, childhood, and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew states part of it; Mark another part; and Luke still another, and yet they agree, as they were led by the Holy Ghost.

John, however, makes no attempt to just give us the life of Christ on earth. He starts way beyond any other book in the Bible, back in eternity, and goes on to show us simply the eternal Sonship of the eternal Son of God, the Christ who had no beginning and shall have no end. John always seems to keep us in the heavens. When you follow Matthew,
Mark and Luke, you are down among men — always among men — and you see the Son of God toiling as a man, laboring with Israel. But when you read the book of John, you do not feel that you are among men at all. Somehow you feel that you are away off in the heavens, observing Christ, God’s Son. You feel that you are like an eagle, soaring in the heavens, and that God has given you an eye so strong that you can go into the very fulness and brightness of the sun at noonday because you have to do that to see Christ in the book of John.

Notice how the Gospel of John begins. Read with me verses 1 and 2:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

“The same was in the beginning with God.”

This begins farther back than Genesis, and differs in this respect from the other three Gospels. I want you to note the contrast between this beginning and that of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Why Four Gospels?

My friends, have you ever wondered why there were four Gospels, and only four? Have you asked yourself, “Why were there not five, or three, or even just one?” Well, first of all, you need to go back into the Old Testament to find the portrait of the Messiah presented in a four-fold way.

There are more than three hundred definite prophecies of Christ’s first coming into the world in the Old Testament and these may be well grouped under four official titles for the Son of God who came to redeem lost humanity. Let us never forget that all these minute prophecies were written in God’s Word hundreds of years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, in order that the world might recognize in Jesus of Nazareth the eternal Son of the eternal God. Here are these titles, found in the Old Testament, and later made use of in the four Gospels as we shall soon see:

“A righteous Branch — a King” (Jer. 23:5)

“My Servant the Branch” (Zech. 3:8)

“The Man whose name is the Branch” (Zech. 6:12)

“The Branch of the Lord... beautiful and glorious” (Isa. 4:2)

Let us examine these Scriptures a little more in detail. Note, first of all, that the American Standard Version (generally called “the Revised”) explains in the margin that the word branch means a shoot, a bud, or a sprout. A similar use of the term is found in Isaiah 11:1 (A.S.V.):

“And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.”

“Behold... a King!”

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch (shoot or bud) and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby He shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:5, 6).

In these words Jeremiah was speaking directly to his own people, Israel. The Lord was speaking to the people of that day about His Son, the King. Then God chose Matthew to present Him from the standpoint of the King of Israel in the Gospel age. That is why Matthew records things the other Gospels do not mention.

In this connection, I want you to note the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew which reads on this wise, chapter one, verse 1:

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

Now, my friends, as a Gentile that does not mean anything to you. If you put the Gospel of Matthew into the hands of a Gentile, one who is not a son of Israel, he will see absolutely no meaning or force in that verse. But if you put the book of Matthew into the hand of a genuine Jew, that is, an old-time Jew, who believes the writings of Moses, and one who is looking for the coming of the Messiah, he will see sense in this first verse of the Gospel of Matthew. He knows that his Messiah must be the son of Abraham and the son of David.

Consequently, Matthew is showing Jesus as the son of Abraham and heir of Abraham’s land and Son of God, the heir to David’s throne. This might not mean much to you as
a Gentile, or even as a Christian, unless you have studied God's Word, and clearly understand God's covenant with Abraham and David. You would struggle through about sixteen verses of names in the genealogy of Christ which follows and it would all be an enigma to you. But not so to a Jew. The genealogy of a King is important. It qualifies Him for His throne. So Matthew presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, the One who inherits Abraham's land and David's throne.

Some years ago I saw in the Sunday School Times a most impressive cartoon. A stately throne was pictured, but no one was sitting on it. It was entitled, "The Empty Throne." Well, that is just what has occurred. No one is occupying the throne of David, for nineteen hundred years ago the Jews said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." So Matthew in his book is setting Him forth as the heir to the empty throne. Have you ever noticed, my friends, the first question in the book of Matthew is: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2). And I repeat that this is the reason that the book begins with a reference to Abraham and David, and is why Matthew goes back no farther than that is his genealogy of Jesus Christ.

"Behold... my Servant!"
"Behold, I will bring forth MY SERVANT the Branch, (or shoot, or sprout)" (Zech. 3:8).

Here Christ is presented in the Old Testament as the Servant of Jehovah and in the New Testament Mark is used by God to so reveal Him as the One who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (10:45). He describes the ceaseless deeds of mercy and the mighty miracles of grace of the faithful Servant of Jehovah.

Now I want you to notice that Mark gives no record of the birth of Christ at all. Have you not wondered about that? Well, my friend, if you were employing someone as a servant, if you were hiring someone to cut your lawn, you would not require a birth certificate from him, nor would you ask who his grandfather was. All you would be interested in was whether he was honest and whether he could do a good job. The genealogy of a servant has no significance whatsoever.

However, if a man came asking for your daughter's hand in marriage, you would want to know his background. Matthew went fully into the genealogy of Christ but Mark does not, because Mark is presenting the Lord Jesus Christ as the Perfect Servant, the Mighty Servant of God. Mark's plan is to show that Christ came to subject Himself to the will of the Father and to do the work which His Father gave Him to do. You find in Mark the word "immediately" or "straightway" forty times. You are always reading that "immediately" He did this, or "straightway" He did that.

I want you to note how the Gospel of Mark begins; there we read chapter 1, verses 1-4:

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

Mark begins with John the Baptist. That is as far back as he goes. He wants us to see the Lord Jesus Christ beginning His work of redemption and you feel in Mark the speed, the movement, the necessity for getting a task accomplished at once.

"Behold THE MAN!"
"Behold THE MAN whose name is the Branch (or Shoot, or Sprout); and he shall grow up out of his place... and he shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech. 6:12, 13).

It is a marvelous token of divine inspiration that Zechariah should call Christ "The Man... a priest upon His throne." We learn in the book of Hebrews that in order to become a priest, Christ had to become a Man, identifying Himself with His "brethren," for every priest in Israel had to be "taken from among men." No angel was ever a priest.
Zechariah under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit looked down the centuries and saw Him as the “Man, Christ Jesus.”

In the New Testament Luke is selected as the one to give us a picture of Christ in His true humanity. In order to present Him as the Perfect Man, Luke gathered all the material he could from eyewitnesses, as he states in the introduction to his Gospel, chapter 1, verses 1 and 2:

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

“Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word.”

Perhaps Luke tried to find some of the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks on the Bethlehem hills that night when the heavenly host announced the birth of Christ. No doubt he talked to Mary and learned all he could of the way in which the Saviour came into the world. So it is he who records so many details in regard to the birth of Christ. He tells how Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

You see, my dear friends, in that day there was a system of false teaching very similar to the teaching of Christian Science today in which it was claimed the body was not real. They taught that Christ did His mighty works on the basis that He was not real at all! So Luke proved that Christ’s humanity was not only perfect, but that it was real. That is why He speaks of an actual body being folded in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

The Gospel Writers Themselves

Matthew was an official connected with the Roman empire. He was, therefore, God’s choice of the one to write of Christ in His official character as He whose dominion shall some day be “from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (Psalm 72:8). Matthew was a publican, that is, a tax collector for Rome. He was despised by the Jews, because the nation of Israel hated the Roman yoke, and they looked upon anyone who served Rome as unfaithful to Israel. Being a despised publican, Matthew could write, from a heart filled with bitter personal experience, of One who was “despised and rejected of men.”

Mark was not an apostle, but a servant of an apostle, one who ministered to the needs of others. He was known to us in Acts as John Mark, who served Paul and Barnabas. In Second Timothy 4:11 we read in the words of Paul to Timothy:
“Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”

Luke was “the beloved physician” (Col. 4:14), a student of human nature and of the human body. He could write with understanding about human perfections and the sinless character of the Son of Man. He tells more about the beautiful, sacred story of our Lord’s virgin birth than does Matthew; Mark and John do not record the story of His birth. Luke portrays the Lord as the sinless Saviour of a fallen race.

John, who seems to have lived nearest the Lord, who leaned on “Jesus’ bosom” (John 13:23; 21:20), was the Holy Spirit’s choice for putting on record the account of Him who was “in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18), the eternal Son of the eternal God. John was “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” His portrayal of the Saviour is beloved by all who are washed “in the blood of Calvary’s Lamb.”

John’s Introduction

Now I want you to notice just how the Gospel according to John begins. You have noted the beginnings of the other Gospels but here is a radical departure from the style of the Synoptics. But first before we read the first verse of John’s Gospel, look at the 18th verse of chapter 1:

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

You see at once, my friends, that Christ is presented in this Gospel as the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. He came from the bosom of God, and went back to the bosom of God, as the Eternal One. So turning to the first verse of the Gospel, we read this:

“In the beginning was the Word.”

Now in Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1, we read:

“In the beginning God created . . . .”

That is simply beginning with creation. But John says, “In the beginning” — which is far back beyond creation. You can go back just as far as you please, dear friends, and there was the Son of God. He always was in existence. He had neither beginning nor shall He have an ending. If John is going to show us Christ as Deity, if he is going to reveal Christ as the Son of God, he must go back before creation. I suppose there a time when the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit — three Persons in One — dwelt in infinite bliss alone, when all was uncreated space, when there were no millions of stars going about their daily courses; when even the tallest angel that stands in the presence of God, and the cherubim, and the seraphim, had not been created at all; when God had not formed one single thing. There in that past eternity the Son dwelt in the bosom of the Father.

I do trust, my dear friends, that you do not accept what a certain cult called Jehovah’s Witnesses teaches — that Christ is only a created angel. Christ was the Creator of the angels! But even before Michael and Gabriel were created, the Son was, in eternity, in the bosom of the Father. Later on He was plucked from the bosom of God and was given to us to be accursed and hated and slain, to be made an offering for our sins, “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.”

I want to show you another thing in this first verse of the Gospel of John. Look at this very, very closely:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Note those words: “The Word was God.” Now you know who this Word was. The Word was God. He was God Himself, and yet He was with God. Then He was another One. He was with God, and that makes more than One Person in the Godhead, does it not? You know that this is a mystery to us, that is, how there can be Three Persons in the Godhead.

My friends, when you speak of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, never use the expression: “God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost” because that gives the impression that there are three Gods, and there are not three Gods. There is One God in Three Persons. If you want to use a formula for God which includes the Three Persons, say, “God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” How
the Trinity can be Three Persons in One is not contrary to reason; it is above reason. One of these days we shall understand it, but now we must accept it by faith.

One of the greatest definitions of the Trinity that I have ever read came from the lips of a boy who was unbalanced in mind. This poor fellow was never known to utter a rational statement in his life. But when he was dying, he looked up into the heavens, and he said these wonderful words:

"I see, I see, what do I see? Three-in-One, and One-in-Three, And the One in the middle — He died for me."

You cannot find a better definition of the Trinity than that. The Spirit of God led John to present to us a plurality of the Godhead in the very first verse of his Gospel.

But someone may say: "How do you know that the Word in the verse is Christ?" Well, you have it plainly stated in the 14th verse so you have to link the 14th verse with the first in order to make this clear. The Word was God. Who was the Word? Look at verse 14 which reads:

"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."

Then it must be Christ. So there is no question, my friends, that the Word is the Son of God who came down into the world, and was manifested to us.

The Omniscient One
You know, my friends, in the New Testament a wonderful thing is revealed. There is no record whatever that Christ was ever taught about God. Now that made Him different from everyone else. You had to learn about Him. Jesus never did. Every person in this world who knows anything about God had to learn it. Do you remember that was true of Moses? You have the account in the third chapter of Exodus, how Moses was in the wilderness, and they saw a bush that was burning, and it was not consumed. Moses drew near to see this wonderful thing, and then God began to speak to him out of that bush. God commissioned him to go down into Egypt. In the 13th verse of that third chapter of Exodus we read:

"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I am come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?"

You see, Moses did not know who God was. He did not even know His name. Compare that with the statement in the 11th chapter of Matthew in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. There you read this. Jesus is speaking:

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (v. 27).

In other words, Jesus is saying that there is no height, there is no length, there is no depth, there is no breadth about the Person of God that the Lord Jesus Christ does not know. He can reach to the height; He can reach to the depth. He knew God completely. "In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Since no one knows the Father but the Son and no one knows the Son but the Father, everyone in the world who knows about God learned it from the Son. Yet the Son Himself never had to learn it. He always knew. Not one person save Christ ever came into the world who did not have to find out who God was. The little baby born into your home has to learn about Him, and it is well that you begin as early as possible to teach him not only about God, but about the Son, and what the Son did on Calvary for him. But Jesus did not need to be instructed in that regard. The world could teach him nothing. He was the eternal Son, co-existent and co-eternal with the Father and Holy Spirit. Jesus came from God and went back to Him and never asked a question about Him.

Do you not see, my dear friends, how very different the Lord Jesus Christ is from anyone else who ever came into this world? Some men are still asking whether He is the Son of God. Who else like Him ever came into this world?
Who else ever came into the world not needing to learn about God? Who else from the inner recesses of His own knowledge knew all about the Father?

I have to confess to you that what little I know about Him I had to be taught, but nobody ever taught the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to exhibit God, and to reveal God, because He was God. Now that differentiates Christ from all the human race. Modern preachers destroy, or try to destroy, the Christ in whom we believe. Sometimes they say Christ is divine, and all men are divine. Sometimes they drag him down to the level of men, and then again they lift men up to His level. Whichever is done, the distinct position which the Lord Jesus Christ holds is destroyed. He is infinitely above the human race. While the human race is on earth, Christ is an eagle soaring in the heavens. He is a Man, and always shall be a Man because He took humanity into Himself at the incarnation. But before He became a man, He was always the eternal God, and was God when He was here, and shall be God forevermore. He came into the world to reveal who God was — and is. I do trust that all of you believe that. To me the greatest blasphemer that God permits to live is the one who denies the eternal Deity and Sonship of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Let us go back to the first chapter of John, and look at verse 6:

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”

When God sends a man, that one is always a very unassuming person. He does not care much about titles or distinctions. So the only title that John ever had was “the Baptist.” That was given him because he went preaching baptism, and it was also given to distinguish him from John the Evangelist, the man who wrote this fourth Gospel. Let us look at the first part of verse 7 as well:

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

“The same came for a witness.”

Now, my friends, the word, “witness” is the key word of this book. It is the same word you read there in verse 32. Listen to this:

“And John bare record.”

Now that word record, is the same word in the Greek as witness. And then again in verse 33 of the third chapter of John you read this:

“He that hath received his testimony.”

The word testimony is the same as record and the word record the same as witness. I do not know why they have translated it in three different ways. I found the word about fifty times in this Gospel according to John. My friends, I think John is just like a lawyer. He is preparing a case, and he calls up one witness after another. He begins with John the Baptist and goes through all the works of Jesus and he says that the works of Jesus testify to Him as the Son of God. Then he brings up the testimonies of His friends and of His enemies and they also witness to His deity. Finally John the Baptist brings the testimony of God the Father from the heavens and John gives his own testimony of the Deity and Sonship of Christ. Witness after witness is called and gives his testimony and then John leaves the court, having proved his case. But even with all he has included in this wonderful Gospel of John, John states in the 20th chapter, verse 30:

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book . . .”

In other words, John was saying, “I did not bring in all the testimony.” And he continues in verse 31:

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ.”

Now that is why he wrote the book, that you might believe in Jesus Christ as God’s Eternal Son, God’s Messiah, the very God of very God. And why?

“. . . And that believing, ye might have life through his name.”

If you believe that, if you believe that Jesus Christ was the eternal Son of the eternal God; if you receive Him as your personal Saviour, you shall have life through His name.

John had finished his case but when he got to the end, he said a most remarkable thing. He stated:
"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" (21:25).

In effect, John was saying, "I have written enough. There are so many more things I could have written that if I set them down, the world would be filled with the books." Friends, if you think that is imaginary, you are greatly mistaken. If John had written what he knew — it would have filled the world; what about all the things Jesus did that John knew nothing about, for no man can know all? What about the millions of stars you see on a clear night? He made them all. What of the sun and moon and the clouds and the mountains and the rivers and the seas? He made them all. What of man — and all the great resources of earth and sea which man has discovered? The wisdom is all His. What of the angel hosts who adore Him night and day? He created them all. What of the greatest miracle He ever performed — to change the hearts of sinful men and to save their souls throughout eternity? It is all His work through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Begin with John 1:1 and study for yourself throughout this book to 21:25. Every page will reveal the eternal Sonship of the Son of God. Every miracle as related by John shows that He is God. Look in every chapter for these proofs, signs, evidences. Truly the glories of Christ will be unveiled to your heart, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. John wrote for that purpose: to reveal Him as the spotless Son of God and your Saviour that you might have eternal life through believing upon Him alone.

As you see Him One co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you will repeat again and again, "Hallelujah! What a Saviour!" This God-Man is yours, believing friend, and He is mine. God abundantly bless you all.
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