

THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS  
SET FORTH IN THE EARLIER SCRIPTURES

We are to ponder, beloved friends, the Godhead of the Lord Jesus, set forth in the Earlier Scriptures. By grace, I trust, we have NO doubt as to His Godhead. Our hearts experience the wondrous

fulness of blessing linked with the fact that He Who is our Saviour is over all, God blessed for ever. The Later Scriptures bear a CONTINUAL testimony. "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, all things came into being through Him". Moreover, again and again we find attributes which can only belong to God, are His attributes. But this evening we are thinking of the EARLIER Scriptures. These earlier Scriptures are EQUALLY inspired with the Later. The child of God would never think of choosing between them, when there is a healthy condition of heart. He would not say, as a man said to me concerning the Earlier Scriptures, only last night in the open air, "History of the Jews". Nay, there is more than the history of the Jews, there is God's own testimony. We believe by grace in the equal authority of the Earlier and the Later Scriptures. We are sure that the whole is from God, and we rejoice in this FACT. If I may again just leave the subject for a moment, the HUMANITY of the Messiah is often set forth in the Earlier Scriptures. We read of that precious Saviour as the Seed of the woman in Genesis 3, and in type we have the setting forth of His real humanity in the tabernacle again and again. Perhaps it is well to notice in this connection the narrowing of prophecy. Genesis 3, the seed of the woman, Genesis 9 God shall dwell in the tents of Shem. To Abraham were the words spoken, "IN Isaac shall thy seed be called". Narrowing still within Abraham's family we have the renewal of the promise to Isaac, and then in Isaac's family not to Esau, but to Jacob and then in Jacob's family the narrowing of Judah; "for Shiloh will come", says the 49th chapter. The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah. He Who wields the Sceptre shall be from that tribe whence David sprang. Thus we have the narrowing to David's own family, as 2 Sam. 7 makes clear. Thus prophecy continually narrows, but never contradicts, and everything points to that wondrously arranged time when God sent forth His Son, and the Lord Jesus was born the right year, and the right place, of the right family, that He might accomplish the right work, and that to endless ages His blood-bought people might rejoice in that of which He truly said, "It has been finished".

But this evening our subject is not the whole Person of the Lord Jesus, it is a smaller one, yet it is vast. The DEITY of the Lord Jesus set forth in the Earlier Scriptures. We may divide it up thus -

1. Deity set forth by Divine statements.
2. Deity implied; - And in that connection we must not only include words that imply, but typical language which suggests it, and where we have attributes of Messiah which are attributes of God.

alone; or descriptions of relationship to Messiah which would be out of place if Messiah were not God.

First then, Direct statements. I suppose beloved friends, we do well if we take the passages the Holy Spirit has Himself brought before us. Hebrews 1 again and again refers to the Earlier Scriptures to show that Christ is beyond angels, that Christ is over all, God blessed for ever. We have a reference to the words of Psalm 2, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee", and also to Psalm 102. Nor would we forget Psalm 45. Shall we turn to these? In Psalm 2 we read, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against HIS Anointed, saying Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us". Later on we read, "I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son". Here we have as Acts 23 shows, a special reference to the resurrection, but the text implies that here is one beyond angels, for to which individual of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son? Here is therefore a suggestion of Deity that leads on to Psalm 45, where we have the definite words, verse 6, "Thy throne, O God is for ever and ever, the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above those who have a share with Thee". Psalm 102 first explains the humanity of the Lord Jesus, and then we have the striking words addressed to Him, in verse 25, "Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure, yea all of them shall wax old like a garment, and as a vest-ure shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the Same and Thy years shall have no end". Here we have a passage which contains a definite declaration of the Deity of the Lord Jesus, and also an applying to Him of attributes which can only belong to God. Eternity is predicated of Him, creation is ascribed to Him. He is seen as the Ruler over all, in verse 28. Thus we have definite witness from the book of praises. Shall we turn to the prophets? We find in Isaiah 7.14, that the Child who was to be born is called Immanuel, God with us. In chapter 8.8 the term occurs again, O Immanuel, and in 8.10, God with us. This repetition shows that here we have a description of the proper Deity of the Lord Jesus. Nor can we forget Isaiah 9. "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". Thus the term "Mighty God" is central, and if we ask Who is the Mighty God, we look to chapter 10,21 "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob unto the Mighty God". The same book of Isaiah sets forth the Deity of Christ inferentially, but we will rather leave such passages, with the exception of those which the Holy Spirit quoted in Hebrews 1, till a little later. We therefore come next to Jeremiah 23 which has been read. There we read in the sixth verse, "This<sup>is</sup> HIS NAME, whereby He shall be called The LORD Tsidkenu, the LORD our Righteousness". But can this Name, LORD, be given to one that is less than God? Let Isaiah 42 answer "I am THE LORD, that is My Name, and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images". Hence though we read of idols as gods, we never read of them as "LORD". Never does that Name come in the plural, never is it modified with a Hebrew suffix. It stands in solitary grandeur, and where the Holy Spirit gives something of the view of its fulness in Revelation 1, He goes contrary to all rules of ordinary grammar, where we read of grace (in verse 4) from Him Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come. After the word "from" we expect the word "Him" in English. It would sound strange to us to say, "From He That is", but that is actually what the Greek does; yea, more than that, the whole arrangement of grammar is broken to emphasize that God is the eternal, Unalterable One. THAT is the Name which is given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and which therefore asserts and emphasizes His true and real Deity. We might turn on in this connection to Zech. 13.7 "Awake O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man That is My Fellow, saith the LORD of hosts, Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones". I do not say this passage is quite so clear at once to one who rejects the Deity of the Lord Jesus. Its testimony to His humanity is definite. Its testimony to atonement is clear. He Who is the Holy One is yet smitten by the Holy One. This is only possible on the principle of bearing the sins of others. Anything else would be unrighteous. But surely there is more than this in the expression the MAN that is My fellow. "My Friend" the term may imply; but perhaps no word will fully describe its meaning. Here is One Who is marked out as distinct from every man. Distinct from angels, the glorious Lord Jesus Christ. Believers realize His Deity, the more so after Zechariah 12.10.

And this leads us on to other passages which imply the Deity of the Lord Jesus, clearly, if not so definitely on the surface. Genesis 1.1. "In the beginning God(plural) created(singular) the heavens and the earth". Plural, singular, remarkable bringing together.

The Hebrew has a dual form, but here we have the plural which may suggest the very number three. A Triune God created. So the "Let US make man" of the same chapter. Indeed EVERY reference to our Triune God implies the Deity of the Lord Jesus, for there is no one who can claim such a position if He be excluded. Further, we have brought before us a hint of His Deity in the remarkable words of Deut. 6, "Hear, O Israel the LORD, our God, (The word is plural) is One Lord". LORD(singular), God(plural) is One. The High Priests blessing contains a three-fold reference to the Lord. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee", and so forth. Then come the words, "They shall put My Name". My Name" as God says, is the Name of the Threefold LORD. Isaiah 6 is equally clear. There we read, "A Holy One, a Holy One, a Holy One, is the LORD of hosts". Not simply "A Holy One", but "a Holy One, a Holy One, a Holy One" yet only the One LORD of hosts. The latter part of the chapter illustrates this. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?" Moreover, the Deity of the Lord Jesus is implied by such passages as Prov. 8. There we have the attribute of eternity which we have already seen in Psalm 102. This One Who is the True Wisdom, and a Person, speaks about being possessed before God's works of old. "I was set up from everlasting" He says, "from the beginning, or ever the earth was". Here we have an allusion to His link with creation. Himself before all creation. In verse 30 we should read, "Then I became near Him, a steadfast Worker", a Worker in the work of creation. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the Spirit of His mouth. Yes, by the WORD of the Lord, for our Triune God spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast. Nor would we forget Micah 5. This brings before us perhaps a hint of His Deity. "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 days of everlasting". The language is perhaps not quite so manifest in itself, but it is very definite with other Scriptures. There is the special thought of the teaching in Prov. 8, where we read "My delights were with the sons of men". His goings forth were continually in the Earlier Scriptures. Then it was the Lord Jesus Who visited Abraham. It was the Lord Jesus Who visited Manoah, and this at once leads us on to the further completing thought. If the One born in Bethlehem was the One marked for goings forth, Whose delights were with the sons of men, we have a strong proof of Deity, for in Genesis 18, we have the LORD appearing unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Three men came to him. As to those three men we are told that two go on, for in verse 22 the men turned their faces and went toward Sodom, and in 19.1 they are

described as two angels reaching Sodom at even. Perhaps in our English version we lose the force of this; it is not simply 'two angels', but evidently signifies "THE two angels" - the two already mentioned. Abraham stood yet before the LORD, says 18.22, and Abraham prays unto Him. Then the One Who had delights with the sons of men was the LORD, but do we not read in Scripture that even Moses could not behold God's face and live? There must consequently have been a veiling of the essential glory of God, and this is clear if we realize that God the Father remained in His unapproachable Deity, but His beloved Son gave anticipatory partial unveiling with a measure of veiling, anticipatory of that time when He would take the veil of flesh upon Him, and become incarnate remaining on earth for over 30 years. Somewhat similar was the experience of Jacob. We find that Jacob at Peniel confessed He had seen God face to face. Indeed the One Who spoke to him and refused to give His Name said, "As a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed". It was Christ Who appeared to Jacob. We might just turn on to the passage already mentioned respecting Manoah. We find that This One declared His Name was hidden, His Name was the Wonderful Name, which we also read in Isaiah 9.6, Judges 13. 18. The angel of the Lord (verse 3) appearing as a man of God (verse 6). The angel of God (verse 9). The Angel of the Lord, in verse after verse. Verse 18 mentions the Name is Wonderful, and in the 22nd verse "We have seen GOD". This was true. There are several passages where we have This One, even "The Angel That redeemed" - marked off from all created angels. To Gideon there was the same visitation. The Angel appeared. He said, Go in this thy might, have not I sent thee? "The Lord looked upon him" is the description of the Angel there. Thus the incarnation is continually anticipated, and Micah 5 says, The One Whose goings forth were frequent was the One Who was born in Bethlehem, despised and rejected of men. Returning to Isaiah, in the 48th chapter, verse 16, we read, "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning, from the time that it was there am I, and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Me". This cannot be spoken of Isaiah. He was not the Ever-existing One. Then here we have the Lord Jesus Christ, and indeed in that verse we have the three Persons of our Triune God brought before us. Thus eternity is predicated of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Returning again to Jeremiah, we find brought before us This One Who is called, the Lord our righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have an unexpected stress upon this fact when we compare with chapter 33.16. There we have Jerusalem named after the Lord,

but it is not "This is HER name". The language is quite distinct. Our English version looks somewhat similar, but it is altered remarkably by the Holy Spirit, to show up as a kind of foil how different is the Deity of Him Who is brought before us in the 23rd chapter. True the bride is named AFTER the Bridegroom, but it is HIS Name, it is not her name. It is HIS Name before He shall be called by it. HIS Name, the Lord our Righteousness.

We might perhaps also notice the types, though types of Deity are not so common as types of humanity. However in the book of Exodus, and the book of Numbers, we have the Rock, suggesting the spiritual Rock, and that Rock was Christ. But the Rock is a Name of God, "He is the Rock" says Deut. 32. And "The Lord is my rock" is the message more than once in the Psalms, and so when the Lord came down and stood on a rock, and the rock was smitten, there was the thought that Messiah was the Fixed One, Messiah was the Mighty One, Messiah was the Glorious One, Messiah was the Honoured One, Messiah was God! You will notice in Isaiah, chapters 8 and 29, we have two passages which are brought together in 1 Peter 2. Isaiah 8.13,14 - "Sanctify the Lord of hosts, Himself, and let Him be your Fear, and let Him be your dread". And He shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling". Then Isaiah 28.16 "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a Tried Stone, a Precious Corner Stone, and he that believeth on Him shall not make haste". This leads to a further point, "He that believeth on Him". "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord". But here the Stone is marked out as the One on Whom there should be believing. The Stone is plainly laid by God. It is Messiah, the Stone Which the builders rejected, Which becomes the Head of the corner. The Corner-Stone of Zech. 10. 4. So here there is the believing on That One, as Psalm 2.12, to which we have already looked, beautifully puts it, - "Blessed are all they that trust in Him". If He were a man, they would not be blessed for trusting in Him. There would be the reverse of a blessing. But This One is more than a man. In the words of Jeremiah 50.44, He is the Chosen One of Whom God asks the question, "Who is like Me?" He is the One Who is like God, for as the yet earlier Scripture. explains, My Name is in Him. But God will not give away His Name. This One is therefore the Lord of hosts Himself. The same verse in Jeremiah adds and "Who is that Shepherd?" "Give ear, O shepherd of Israel...Thou that dwellest between the cherubim". But, who is the Shepherd? Let Genesis

49. 24 answer, "By reason of the Name of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel". The Shepherd is the Stone. Christ, we have seen, is the Stone, and we know that He is described as the Shepherd. Isaiah 40 illustrates this, and we read of the Shepherd smitten (Zech. 12.7). The Smitten Rock, and the Smitten Shepherd; and both Rock and Shepherd, in this connection with respect to Israel predicate Deity. Such precious instruction leads on to yet one further thought. If we recognize the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ EVERY Scripture fits in. We have passages which speak of our God coming, and not keepin silence, Psalm 50.3. We are told that Israel will say, as they behold Him, "This is our God, we have waited for Him! This is the Lord, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. 25.9). But if He were only a man, or if He were only a great and mighty creature, this would be a strange utterance. Ah, some will say (I do not mean among us), but some will say, "The true God comes, but also a man comes", Messiah. It is true that Scripture does speak of a Man reigning, - That Wonderful Man Who is the King and Who will reign in righteousness when princes rule in judgment; but He is the Son given, as well as the Child born, and if the government is upon His shoulders for He is a Man, He is the Mighty God as we have seen. If you therefore accept BOTH Scripture statements, that is, The Lord shall reign in Mount Zion before His ancients gloriously, and that David shall never want a man to reign, - if you accept both statements, and see that the Lord is the Son of David, everything is quite clear, and the Scriptures coincide and this is the indirect testimony which is so powerful. Nor would we forget in this connection Psalm 110. Here is One Who is Greater than David, albeit He is David's Son, - "The LORD said unto My Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet".

And so we may come, in closing, to the words of Zech. 12. There we have a striking testimony that the One Who is pierced is not merely a creature, but the Creator. For God Himself says, I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication for grace, and they shall look upon ME Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one that mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Here we have the Lord speaking, yet He says that He has been PIERCED. God and Man alike. Thus all Scripture gives the same testimony, and no Scripture is against it. But, oh, beloved friends, that we may know more than the facts of the case, that we may not be mere arguers, but that we may

experience the wondrousness of the Lord's mercy, that He Who was the Mighty God, descended, became a Man, yea and died the death of the cross, that there might be a salvation for poor guilty sinners as we are. Measure the love of God by that wondrous giving up; measure the love of God by that wondrous atoning death of Him Who offered up Himself, Who was the Offerer and the Offering, Who had an eternal Spirit, but yet laid down His soul, and the body that was prepared for Him. Here is the marvellousness of God's love, in which our hearts and minds rejoice. A Divine Saviour has secured a wondrous salvation. It is not merely a great effort, else it might be frustrated, but He Who is the Mighty God has secured this, and therefore there is none higher to undo it. From eternity to eternity He is God, and from eternity we are His people chosen, and to eternity shall they be saved. God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent (Num. 23.19). Our beloved Lord Who took in hand to save sinners, Who made Himself, in heart and action (Jer. 30.21) a Surety on behalf of those who were utterly worthless, Who became Surety for strangers and smarted for them, - He has guaranteed that many sons shall be brought to glory, nor shall there fall one word of His, for with the word of a King there is power, (Eccl. 4) and the Word of our God, Who is King of kings, stand for ever, that we, His blood-bought people may delight in this secured salvation, and declare to poor guilty sinners, not an attempt of man, nor the arrangement nor the scheme even of an angel, but that which is God's eternal purpose ordered in all things and sure! A covenant which shall not be varied, which shall not be put on one side, but in which we may rejoice, because of the Blood of the new covenant. Oh, beloved friends, the subject is one not only for the mind, but for the heart, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that we might praise Him Who is our Saviour, Who over all, God blessed for ever, (Rom. 9.5) has actually raised us up, so that we are made to sit with Him in heavenly places, for we are in Christ Jesus, IF so be that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, (1 Peter 2.3) IF so be that we have been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light (1 Peter 2.9). But oh, let us not persuade ourselves that this is a fact unless we KNOW, by grace, that we ARE in Christ Jesus our Lord. Only if in mercy we are brought near, have we a right to rejoice in this wondrous unveiling. To claim relationship to Christ unless it exists is indeed a sinful act of utter foolishness, for it but adds sin to sin, and hurries on the proud religious, yet unsaved sinner to a heavier doom with the treasures of wrath upon him. But to be in Christ is blessed indeed! Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!

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