

The Metaphors of Christ - The Way

There are at least 14 verses in our New Testaments where Jesus uses metaphors to describe Himself. Most are found in the Book of John. These verses begin with "I am the" and then use one or more words that describe the characteristic or capability which He possesses.

Song number 194 in our current song book employs eight of these statements in a poetic manner. It also uses four statements that are not metaphorical but state His Sonship, His leadership, His Kingship, and His fulfillment of all prophesy. There are then three admonitions followed by a repeat of the first metaphor.

I am sure no one looks at the clauses in the lyrics that way. Some may enjoy the beautiful melody and harmony of the music without considering the words or the verses of scripture that each thought of the song is taken from. For the next few weeks, the Family Talk Blog will consider one or more of the statements in Song Number 194, "*I Am The Way.*"

THE WAY

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) A. T. Robertson said, "He is the way to God and the only way, the personification of truth, the center of life."

In (John 14:5) *Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"* This indicates the disciples still did not know that He was returning to heaven. So without knowing the destination, they were not aware that Jesus had the route planned out for them. God had led Abraham, He led Israel out of Egypt, He had appointed shepherds to lead the people but the people and the shepherds had become lost. As Jesus taught the people, He continually used words, stories, parables, and miracles to show that He was from heaven and was to return there. But He was challenged by the scribes and Pharisees about who He was and where He came from.

"So Jesus again said to them (the Pharisees), "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ...If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." (John 10:7-9) The metaphor of shepherds leading sheep has been a theme in the prophets teaching, Isaiah 40:11; Micah 7:14. Jesus describes Himself as the "door" or the only way into the protection offered by the master of the sheep. The Pharisees should have understood that He is the promised and legitimate door of access to the spiritual "Fold of the House of Israel".

It is through Him as the door that we have the only way to access the saving grace of God, (Romans 5:1-2). That gives us access into His body, the church (Colossians 1:18-24), and to the presence of God in prayer. Although the people of Israel could pray to Him, the "presence of God" was denied to all but the High Priest by the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. When Christ died on the cross, the curtain was torn from top to bottom, (Matthew 27:51) showing that the way to God was now open to all.

The Hebrew writer goes into great detail on this curtain in Hebrews chapters 9 and 10. Because of Christ as our Great Shepherd, Hebrews 13:20, we have great boldness to follow Jesus into the Father's house, (John 14:2-3), by the living way, by faith in Him, since He entered into the presence of God as our High Priest, (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Do we know "The Way" that leads to heaven?