

JESUS, THE WAY

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“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going.”

“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” (John 14:1-6).

“I’m going on a journey, and I want you to join me. I’ll get everything ready for your arrival. You know the way to get there.”

Thomas was thinking of a “way” as any ordinary person would — a path, a course, a direction from here to there. But he was clueless. They all were. “We don’t know Your destination, so how can we know the route.”

But this way was not a road, but more of a pattern or a method, for the way was a Person. “Through me.”

Jesus does not *point to* the way, nor does He *represent* the way; He *is* the way. Or, to put it another way, the way is Jesus.

We must be very clear about this: the way is not *like Jesus*, nor is it *about Jesus*. True Christianity is not a matter of imitation, but of incarnation. The way *is Jesus*.

Christ *living in you*, is our hope of glory.

Moreover, He did not say that He is *a way*, but *the way*. The *only way*.

How do you react to that statement? If you have found Him, if you know Him, I am certain you applaud it. But if all you have found is His religion (the shell of the Man), then disappointments and uncertainties may torment you. Anything less than Jesus Himself, the Resurrection and the Life, is but a religious husk, a hollow creed, and unsteady footing.

If uncertainties plague you, give yourself *to Him*. Cast aside your ideas of a religion that God approves, and instead begin a relationship with the God who loves you as you are, right now.

What are we to make of this way? Jesus is the way to what? What was His destination?

According to John 13:3, Jesus knew *“that He had come from God and was going back to God.”* He is the way to God.

Way to God

The Romans ruled an empire that, at its height, spanned much of the inhabited earth. They were responsible for exporting civilization through a vast system of roads and waterways. Thus, the saying: “All roads lead to Rome.”

Many have assumed the same is true of God — that many paths lead to Him, or even that all religious and ethical paths eventually lead to Him. But this is the result of faulty thinking — the kind that says if a religion is *like Jesus* it is good and it will suffice. As a result, many seek to compare (and try to align) the ethics of Buddha or Mohammed or Confucius or Lao Tse with those of Jesus.

If we chose our clothing that way, then every knock-off would be our first choice. As long as it looks like the original, feels like the original, smells like the original, it’s just as good as the original. (And if you think that way, I have a couple of dozen Rolexes to sell you after the service — cheap!)

You may not have the money to afford a Maserati, but I’m sure that if you did, you wouldn’t invest it in a look-alike. You’d want the real thing.

Just so, be done with religious look-alikes. The Mormons may call attention to family values, the Islamists may exercise strong devotional habits, the Bahais may stress acceptance and unity, and the Buddhists may emphasize peaceful contentment, but they’re just imitating the look-and-feel of real Christianity. They don’t have Jesus. In fact, in one way or another, they reject Him — as if to say, “We have His teachings, we have His example, what do we need with *Him*?”

But Jesus Himself could not have been clearer: “No one can come to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). He did not say, “Most cannot come to the Father except through me,” but “no one.” Not even one.

He added, “Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved” (John 10:9).

Referring to both Jews and non-Jews, Paul wrote: “Now all of us can come to the Father... because of what Christ has done for us” (Ephesians 2:18).

If you really want to know God — not merely *about* Him, but you want to become personally acquainted with the Creator — come to Jesus, take Jesus into your life, choose to follow Him. He brings you to God.

Way TO salvation

However, just coming to God the way we are could be an awful experience. I think I can give you a glimpse of what I mean by relating Zechariah’s vision (chapter 3). He saw Jeshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord. The Accuser, Satan, was also there, making accusations against Jeshua. And Zechariah recorded that “Jeshua’s clothing was filthy as he stood before the angel.” The Hebrew word for filthy (*tso’im*) means “smeared with excrement.” It could not have been worse! What a picture of the human sinful condition. We need more than simply to come to God, because our natural condition is absolutely unacceptable in His sight. We need a Savior.

The angel spoke up to those standing all around, “Remove his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Jeshua, “I have freely forgiven your iniquity and will dress you in fine clothing.” (Zechariah 3:4)

We need Someone who can remove our filthiness and clothe us in righteousness. We need Someone who will rescue us from our sins. Jesus is our Forgiver. He is the way to salvation. He is the way to spiritual transformation.

Perhaps you are familiar with the central verse of the Bible: John 3:16 — *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

The Greek word order is a little different. And the significance of the word order is this: Greek places words in the order of their emphatic importance. The original language reads like this: *“So loved God the world”* (John 3:16; Greek word order). In John’s thinking, *God* was not the most important word, nor was *world*. The most important element was the *love* of God, and the most important thing was *how* He loved us — He gave His one and only Son, Jesus.

“There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Jesus alone is the way to salvation.

And there is more, so much more!

Way OF salvation

Jesus is also the way *of* salvation.

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him” (Colossians 2:6).

Salvation is more than an event. It is also a way of living. The way of salvation is the way a saved person conducts his or her life, walking with the Lord.

It is recorded that Jesus said, *“Follow me,”* 22 times in the Gospels. He said, *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me”* (John 10:27). Following Jesus is how we walk *“in the light”* (1 John 1:7) and maintain our fellowship with God and His people. He said, *“If you follow me, you won’t...walk in darkness”* (John 8:12).

Once we have received Christ Jesus as Lord, we can work out our salvation from day to day, with *“fear and trembling”* (Phi 2:12). In other words, with carefulness, for it is God’s intention to wonderfully conform us *“to the likeness of His Son”* in every situation and relationship.

This is where His ethic properly enters in, as a daily expression of our faith. But those who want to skip ahead to this point, and ignore the necessity of the new birth, also miss the *power* of the new life. For the ethic of Jesus demands a *divine* righteousness, which no one but Jesus Himself can achieve. Therefore, if Jesus does not actually work in us this kind of righteousness, we cannot produce it on our own.

Thus, Jesus is also the way *of* salvation. Responsively, obediently following His lead each day, as the Holy Spirit guides and helps us, is how we work out or demonstrate our salvation (and His saving power) to the world.

Way INTO Salvation

The arrival of Jesus Christ, through the new birth, into the heart of each believer, and the continuing communion of Jesus each day that we live, through the Holy Spirit, leads us to the inevitable conclusion of God’s plan: the fullness of our salvation.

Jesus is not only the portal of salvation and the power of salvation, He is also the promise of salvation completed!

“God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns” (Philippians 1:6).

For our salvation, according to the Scriptures, has three dimensions — past, present, and future.

We *have been saved* by God’s grace through our initial act of trusting Jesus to forgive us (Ephesians 2:5).

As we follow the Lord Jesus Christ, practicing our faith in Him daily, we *are being saved* (1 Corinthians 1:18), and conformed to His likeness.

And it is our steadfast hope that Jesus will return for His people to take us to be with Him in Heaven, where all of His promises will be fulfilled, and on that day we *will be saved* (Romans 5:9), in the final, complete sense.

Nearing the end of his life, Paul exclaims, *“And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of His return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to His appearing”* (2 Timothy 4:8).

Therefore, he urged us, *“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Hebrews 12:1-2).

It is this amazing Jesus, who loved us and gave Himself for us to make us right with God, who sought us out and wooed us until we relented of our self-will and yielded our lives to Him.

It is this same, gracious Jesus, who bears with our unsteadiness and mercifully greets us with each new day to lead us in the paths of light and love, and shows us the Father’s way and refreshes us with His Spirit.

And it is this same wonderful Jesus, who faithfully prays that our trust in Him will not collapse beneath the weight of darkness and uncertainty until the day He returns to wipe away all our tears and complete our glorious transformation.

Jesus *secures* our wonderful hope of salvation. He will come again and every eye will see Him! And so, we shall be with the Lord forever! For He is the sure Way of salvation. He is our Savior.