

THE GREAT “I AM’S” of JESUS

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

I AM THE WAY

When Jesus was about to leave His disciples He delivered a farewell address. He encouraged the disciples to believe in Him as they believed in God that their hearts might not be troubled. Then He pointed them to the Father’s house where, He declared, there are many dwelling places and to which He was going to prepare a place for His disciples. Thomas declared that the disciples did not know the way. This gave Jesus the opportunity to say in four words what He had spent three years trying to make clear to His disciples, “**I am the way**” (John 14:6). At the beginning of His ministry Jesus pointed out the two ways. He said to the multitude, as He addressed the disciples:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it
(Matthew 7:13,14).

From this first picture of the two ways, the broad and the narrow, until the end of His ministry Jesus tried to point the disciples to the true way. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus not only pointed out the better of the two ways, but He warned His hearers about false prophets and false ways. He concluded the Sermon on the Mount with His description of the two builders, one building on the sand and the other building on the rock. The wise man found the narrow way and the solid rock.

Jesus is the way to the Father. Immediately after making the statement “**I am the way,**” Jesus elaborated the meaning by saying, “**No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**” He went on to say that if the disciples had known Him they would have known the Father also. It was for that purpose that Jesus came into the world. He wanted to introduce mankind to the Father. He came to present the Father to man. The way to the Father is through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the only way. Only as we know Him can we know God. He was God in the flesh after He was God in heaven. And He is God in heaven now, taking His place in the Godhead. At the time He was speaking to the disciples He was a member of the Godhead, even though He was a man in the flesh. He was both God and man.

Jesus declared to Philip, who wanted to be shown the Father, “**Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.**”

Jesus is the way to the Father. He declared, “**I and my Father are one.**” The disciples had found their way to Jesus. He was all they needed to know God the Father.

Jesus is the way of salvation. Men have tried many ways, but Jesus pointed out the narrow way. When He said to His disciples, who wanted to know the Father and wished to be shown the Father, that He was the way, He was answering once for all the question of the broad way and the narrow way. There is only one way to salvation. That is through Jesus Christ. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby man must be saved. Jesus is the only name.

It is interesting to study the many names given to Jesus both in prophecy and in His ministry. Among the names are: Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Wonderful, Counselor, Judge, Lawgiver, King, King of kings, Lord, Lord of lords, Son, Only Begotten Son, Beloved, Son of David, Son of Man, Son of God, Babe, Child, Jesus, Saviour, Jesus Christ, Lord Jesus Christ, and Prince of Peace.

What the disciples called Jesus, was descriptive of what they thought of Him. For instance, after Thomas had been missing during the first appearance of Jesus to His disciples, he was doubtful and unhappy the whole week until the disciples met again in the upper room and Jesus appeared again. Upon seeing Jesus and hearing His voice with the invitation to examine the nail prints, Thomas cried out, “**My Lord and my God.**” What better declaration of Jesus as Lord and Saviour than that!

I know of a world that is sunk in shame
Whose hearts oft faint and tire:
But I know of a name, a precious name
That can set that world on fire.

I know a soul that is steeped in sin
That no man's art can cure.
But I know of a name, a precious name
That can make that soul all pure.

I know of a life that is lost to God
Bound down by things of earth:
But I know of a name, a precious name,
That can bring that soul new birth.

So, listen, my heart, an angel speaks
To save thy life from dross:
Christ Jesus is the name, the name,
He saves by the way of the cross.

Jesus is the way to success. Every man wants to succeed, but not every man knows what he wants by way of success. The Christian will be able to measure his success according to his devotion to Christ and his submission to the will of the Lord. God's way of measuring success should be man's way of achieving it. The true measure of success is in the prosperity of the soul.

Paul reached a high climax in his success experience when he was able to declare (Philippians 4:13) **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”** This is real success. Whoever would succeed, let him measure his strength according to the ability of Christ.

Jesus is the way of happiness. The pursuit of happiness is the chief business of man. Not everyone finds the true formula for happiness or its source. Some seek it by way of joyful experiences. There may be happiness without joy; there is joy without happiness. Some try wealth. The poor and the wealthy may be happy; the rich and the poor may be unhappy. The wealth of man’s possessions does not measure the wealth of his life. No, true happiness comes through finding God through Jesus Christ and surrendering to His will and way. Jesus is the way of happiness. Paul was able to express his formula for happiness by describing its source in these words, **“For my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”**

Jesus is the way to heaven. He called Himself the door. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the key to heaven. When He was leaving His disciples He described His future occupation by saying, **“I go to prepare a place for you.”** There are many dwelling places in heaven. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for His followers. When He has the place ready and has us ready for the place, He will come and receive us unto Himself. Jesus stands at the gate of heaven with hands outstretched toward His children in the world, saying, **“Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest.”**

Jesus is the way out of darkness. When he said of Himself, **“I am the light of the world,”** He was pointing the way out of darkness. Man gropes in the darkness of the world until he looks up and sees Jesus. Then he is able to walk by the light of heaven in the path of righteousness. Darkness is synonymous with ignorance. As Jesus is the way out of darkness, He is the way out of ignorance. Book learning is not necessarily intelligence or brilliance. The richest knowledge is of Christ. Many who are well educated according to worldly standards may be quite ignorant of Christ. The way out of darkness and ignorance is through Christ.

Jesus is the way out of sin. This is not exactly the same thing as saying that Jesus is the way of salvation. To repent of sin and to trust Jesus for salvation is the way of atonement. This is the way to get rid of past sin. Jesus is also the way out of the sinful life. The Christian will have less of sin in his life when he has more of Christ. He will be like Jesus when he walks in the way that Jesus points. This is the way out of the sins of the past and the sin that constantly besets one.

Jesus is the way out of bewilderment. The world is beset by confusion. Someone asked an oriental what his religion was, and he said it was Confucianism, but misspelled it “confusionism.” It may be that Confucianism is confusion. It is true that our world is in confusion today. When has it not been? The way out of the wilderness is through Jesus Christ our Lord. If the leaders of the nations would look to Christ for direction and leadership, world conferences on the diplomatic level would reach better decisions. If in national and international affairs Jesus were recognized as Lord, the world would come out of its confusion. If in the individual life Jesus were recognized as Lord, confusion would be dispelled.

Jesus is the way out of selfishness. The only selfless living is through Jesus Christ. He lived the selfless life. His followers have walked in His train. The less of self there is in the Christian's life and the more of Jesus in it, the happier the Christian and the more useful to the Lord. Selfishness destroys family relationships. It undermines churches. It destroys businesses. Selfishness is a gross sin clothed in rich garments. Often it is not recognized for what it is until, like a cancer, it has eaten up the soul. Jesus lived for others; He would inspire His followers to do likewise. The way out of self is through Jesus. The Christian should so live that it is not he who lives but Christ living in him.

Jesus is the way out of timidity. The timid soul misses the fruits of dynamic living. When Jesus is in the life of the Christian, timidity is eliminated. It is no longer the individual seeking a place for himself, but a Christian seeking to honor his Lord.

I was a student secretary in the University of Alabama in the early days of the Inter-Board Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Frank Leavell, secretary of the commission, called on me in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Among other things, Frank said, "I have not seen in the Alabama Baptist anything about your work." My answer to Dr. Leavell was, "Do you think I am going to toot my own horn?" The Christian statesman replied, "John, you would not be telling about what you are doing, but you ought to let Alabama Baptists know what the Lord is doing through you in trying to reach the students of the University of Alabama for Him." Another experience of mine was in my call to the ministry. I was a timid country youth, who could not stand up to make a speech. I had tried to debate in school but could not speak. I had been called on to lead in prayer and had asked to be excused. When the Lord laid His hand upon me and called me into the ministry, He destroyed my timidity. He gave me the incentive and the inspiration to witness for Him. This He will do for the Christian whom He calls on for his testimony.

Jesus is the way out of temptation. The Christian's life is beset by the tempter. Every direction in which he turns, Satan faces the Christian. What can be done about it? The way the Christian answers this dilemma will determine his usefulness in the Lord's service. Jesus overcame temptation. The three major temptations which are attractive to men were leveled at Jesus by Satan. In every instance, through dedication to the will of the Father and through prayer to His Heavenly Father, Jesus overcame the tempter. Even so, the Christian will be able to face every temptation that besets him when he builds a life of constant prayer. Living in the will of Christ means seeking His way for every day. Prayer will help to overcome temptation. Jesus is more ready to answer than the tempted Christian is to ask. Jesus is the way out and the way up. Will you walk in that way?

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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