

JESUS: I AM THE DOOR

Jesus' "I AM" (11)

Banska Bystrica, 27th July 2014

John 9:39 - 10:10 Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt ¹ but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains. **10:1** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

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0. INTRO: THE PROBLEM OF GOVERNMENT

- "through Christ"

0.1. THE CONTEXT

- John 9:39-41 – the Pharisees¹ in conflict with Jesus – because of (1) teaching with power ⇒ popularity with the people [Mt 12:22-24] = envy, (2) rejection of the Pharisaic traditions ⇒ casting doubt on their purity [Mt 5:20], → **Isa 56:10-12** Israel's watchmen are blind, all of them,

¹ "The Pharisees ... not only took part in government, administration of justice, and legal instruction, but also formed associations dedicated to the practical realization of the Levitical ideals. ...the Pharisees, and especially the Pharisaic scribes, had two sources of power: first, their position as members of the High Council; and second, their position as functionaries and authorities among the common people." (BO REICKE *The New Testament Era*, Philadelphia : Fortress Press, 1974, pp. 159, 162)

they know nothing; all of them are mute dogs, they cannot bark; they dream, lie down, and love to sleep. ¹¹ These dogs have fierce appetites; they never have enough. And they are shepherds who have no discernment; all of them turn to their own way, every last one for his own gain. ¹² "Come, let me get *some* wine, let's guzzle *some* beer; and tomorrow will be like today, only far better!"

- The Pharisees used were popular, represented a radical party of purity – yet Jesus says: For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (**Matt 5:20**)
- the man born blind – religious and social problem of confessing Jesus – he was expelled from the synagogue, and his parents renounced him

"It was the custom of the Saviour Christ, when any came unto Him, to reply not merely to the words which they expressed through their voice, but to speak with reference to their inward thoughts also, since He sees both heart and reins; for to Him all things are naked and laid open, and there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight."²

0.2. THE METAPHORICAL MEANING OF “THE DOOR”

- There are two easily overlooked changes in metaphorical thinking: (1) the human shepherds are also the sheep, (2) Jesus, the door, is also the Shepherd
- “the door” – a mixed metaphor with “the Good shepherd” (the door → the entry under his leadership[Good Shepherd])
 - Jesus as the door: (1) for the leaders, (2) for the sheep → leaders of men have to behave as sheep at the same time (leaders towards humans & sheep towards the Lord)
 - → (1) the door to the rightful leadership, (2) the door into eternal life
- to enter through the door [for the leaders] → (1) access – relationship to Jesus first, (2) mediation – doing the Shepherd’s work for the sheep
- to enter through the door [for the sheep] → (1) resting, (2) doing, (3) living

0.3. PRINCIPLES OF AUTHORITY

- (1) temporary and (2) spiritual
- under authority → in authority

1. JESUS: THE DOOR TO LEADERSHIP (→CREATION)

- authority over humans
- every authority, if it be good, needs to be representing Jesus’ authority, His values, His name!

1.1. GN 1 & 2 (LEADERSHIP BEFORE THE FALL)

- Leadership = to represent God (Gn 1) [man - the image of God (→ Heb 1)]
 - “image” – to lead → is to do the will of the higher authority
 - **Mt 22:21** "Therefore, **give** back to **Caesar** the things that are Caesar's [temporal authority], and to God the things that are God's [the image of God]."
 - ruling over animals → ~ political power of **coercion** (**Ps 32:9** Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.)
 - → without *understanding*
- Leadership = to love the one who is equal in dignity (the subjection of *love* vs. the subjection of *fear*) → ~ spiritual power of **liberty**
 - **1Cor 11:3** But I want you to understand that the **head** of every man is Christ, the **head of a wife is her husband**, and the **head of Christ is God**.
 - → with *understanding*

² CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, p. 63.

1.2. JESUS: THE RIGHTFUL RULER

- how to represent God → as Jesus did it
- Jesus – the Heir (**1Cor 15:27** "God has put all things in subjection under his feet.)
 - **Col 1:15-18** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
 - **Phil 2:9-11** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1.3. TO LEAD ⇒ TO MEDIATE GOD'S RULE

- The temptation of earthly rulers: totalitarianism
 - the Nazis:

“When the Christian aristocrats who had taken part in the July 1944 plot [to assassinate Hitler] were brought to trial, the president of the court, Roland Freisler, told their leader: 'Count Moltke, Christianity and we Nazis have one thing in common and one only: we claim the whole man'.”³
 - [Billy GRAHAM 1957]⁴ the Communists:

I have in my hand a letter written by a Communist student at an eastern university after he had gone to Mexico and become a Communist. He wrote to his fiancée, breaking off their engagement. Here is in part what he said. This was given to me by the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Montreat, North Carolina, where I live. Here is what it says: - We Communists have a high casualty rate. We're the ones who get shot and hung and lynched and tarred and feathered and jailed and slandered, and ridiculed and fired from our jobs, and in every other way made as uncomfortable as possible. A certain percentage of us get killed or imprisoned. We live in virtual poverty. We turn back to the party every penny we make above what is absolutely necessary to keep us alive. We Communists don't have the time or the money for many movies, or concerts, or T-bone steaks, or decent homes and new cars. We've been described as fanatics. We are fanatics. Our lives are dominated by one great overshadowing factor, THE STRUGGLE FOR WORLD COMMUNISM. - We Communists have a philosophy of life which no amount of money could buy. We have a cause to fight for, a definite purpose in life. We subordinate our petty personal selves into a great movement of humanity, and if our personal lives seem hard, or our egos appear to suffer through subordination to the party, then we are adequately compensated by the thought that each of us in his small way is contributing to something new and true and better for mankind. - There is one thing in which I am dead earnest and that is the Communist cause. It is my life, my business, my religion, my hobby, my sweetheart, my wife and mistress, my bread and meat. I work at it in the daytime and dream of it at night. Its hold on me grows, not lessens as time goes on. Therefore I cannot carry on a friendship, a love affair, or even a conversation without relating to this force which both drives and guides my life. I evaluate people, books, ideas and actions according to how they effect the Communist cause and by their attitude toward it. I've already been in jail because of my ideas and if necessary, I'm ready to go before a firing squad.
- **Modern liberal democracy** – does not prohibit any religion *BUT*: (1) it makes religion out of politics → promise of earthly paradise; this-worldly eschatology; (2) in the public realm it makes all religions irrelevant, (3) it tries to get total attention and commitment by creating a competitive and predatory environment (4) it creates anti-Christian attitudes by divinizing human rights – free from biblical morality

³ JOHNSON, P. *A History of Christianity*, New York : Simon & Schuster, 1979.

⁴ *Mission Commitment*, Speech delivered at Urbana 1957 by Billy Graham

1.3.1. TEMPORARY RULE (“POLITICS”)

- ...has to be limited – to the protection of the weak, promotion of justice, development of the temporary welfare...

[AUGUSTINE] Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies (*latrocinia*)? For what are robberies themselves, but little kingdoms? The band (*manus*) itself is made up of men ; it is ruled by the authority of a prince, it is knit together by the pact of the confederacy (*pactum societatis*); the booty is divided by the law agreed on. If, by the admittance of abandoned men, this evil increases to such a degree that it holds places, fixes abodes, takes possession of cities, and subdues peoples, it assumes the more plainly the name of a kingdom, because the reality is now manifestly conferred on it, not by the removal of covetousness, but by the addition of impunity.⁵

Odstraníme-li spravdnost, čo zústane z vlád, ne-li veľiké loupežnícké podniky? Vždyť ani lupičské sdružení není nic jiného nežli stát v malém. Banda se skládá z lidí, řídí se rozkazy náčelníka, je vázána společenskou smlouvou, kořist si rozděluje podle zákona dohody. Jakmile se tato spřež, přibírajíc vyvrhele, rozmůže natolik, že ovládne území, založí sídla, obsadí obce a podmaní si národy, tu se na ni hodí ještě zřejměji jméno „stát“; to jí udělí už nepokrytě - ne upuštění od chamtivosti, ale získání beztrestnosti. Dal totiž vtipnou a pravdivou odpověď Alexandru Velikému jeden zajatý pirát. Když se král toho člověka ptal, co ho to napadlo ohrožovat moře, řekl s upřímným vzdorem: „Zrovna co tebe, že svět; ale protože já to dělám s nepatrným korábem, říkají mi loupežník; ale tobě panovník, protože to děláš s velikým lodstvem.“

- no earthly leadership can (1) judge and control mind and emotions, (2) exercise the ultimate authority over human souls and eternal destiny

1.3.2. SPIRITUAL RULE (“RELIGION”)

- to lead in the church = to serve (Mt 20:26-27 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant (διάκονος),²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave (δοῦλος),)
- Mediation in the church:
 - 1Peter 5:2-3 ...shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but freely, according to God's will; not for the money but eagerly; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.
 - 2Tim 2:24-26 The Lord's slave must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able to teach, and patient, ²⁵instructing his opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance to know the truth. ²⁶ Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will.
- to lead = to mediate relationship to Jesus Christ
 - WILKERSON *There's something about that name* “Only few nations had leaders who spoke without confusion, freely and lovingly about Jesus name. How many intellectual presidents of universities you can name that are not afraid openly recognize the name and power of Jesus?”⁶

2. JESUS: THE DOOR TO LIVING (→SALVATION)

- Salvation: All other rulers who do not mediate for Christ are (1) stealing, (2) killing, (3) destroying the sheep. (“The modern Christian laughs at the idea of a final judgment. That shows how far we can stray away if we imbibe the idea that the modern mind is infallible and not our Lord.”⁷)
- Entering through Jesus as the door leads to life of salvation (in this sequence): (1) rest, (2) work/fight, (3) fulfilment
 - [Watchman NEE] “Thus we have, in all, three sub-divisions of the Epistle to the Ephesians, setting forth the believer's position in Christ (i. 1-3. 21), his life in the world (4. 1-6. 9), and his attitude to the enemy (6. 10-24).”⁸

⁵ AUGUSTINE *The City of God IV.4.*

⁶ WILKERSON, D. *David Wilkerson Speaks out*, [translated back from Slovak translation]

⁷ CHAMBERS, O. *The Highest Good.*

2.1. GO IN (REST)

- **Ps 121:8** The LORD will keep your **going out** and your **coming in** from this time forth and forevermore. ("Business before pleasure!")
- The gospel begins with rest:
 - **Mt 11:28** "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will **give** you rest...."

2.2. GO OUT (WORK, FIGHT)

- **Mt 11:29-30** ...Take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

2.3. FIND PASTURE (MEANING, FULFILLMENT)

- **John 4:14** But whoever drinks from the **water** that **I** will **give** him will never get thirsty again--ever! In fact, the **water I** will **give** him will become a well¹ of **water** springing up within him for eternal life."

3. CONCLUSIONS

- Jesus, the only rightful ruler of human beings, must be the decisive reference point in every leadership on earth, to whom everything is related. → His Name.
- To qualify for leadership we have to be both sheep under authority (image of God; servant of Jesus) and shepherds in authority (serving and mediating God's will).
- Jesus' leadership begins by rest (faith without the works of law), continues with vigorous activity (work, fight) and gives eternal meaning and fulfilment (God's glory, immortality).

⁸ NEE, W. *Sit, Walk, Stand*, Eastbourne : Kingsway, 1986, p. viii.