

## Doctrine of Christ

### “I Am the Door” \* “I Am the Sheep Gate”

#### John 10:7

*“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.”*

1. When Jesus used the formally, “I Am”, He used the language that was reserved for God in the Septuagint, εγω εμι, ergo emi, I AM.
  - *Exodus 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*
2. The statement of Christ as being the Door is set against the backdrop of the healing of a blind man in John 9:1-34. It is also united to another I Am, as Christ calls Himself the Good Shepherd.
  - *I Am the Door. John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*
  - *I am the Good Shepherd. John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*
3. When Jesus called Himself the Door, or the entrance to the Sheep Gate, He was speaking to a generation who culturally understood the importance of keeping sheep.
4. The Old Testament often mentions shepherds, and shepherding reflected in Psalm 23.
5. The Jews were familiar with the keeping of sheep throughout Palestine. During the day the sheep were led to pastures, and then to still waters. At night, they were brought to a place that was protected, and enclosed. It was called the sheepfold.
6. There were a variety of sheepfolds. Some were made out of wood. A fence was made to hedge the sheep in.
7. Often the sheepfold was made out of stones, to form a very secure fortress. This would better protect the sheep from thieves, or wild animals. A stone wall would also keep the sheep from being scattered if the wooden fence was destroyed in some manner.
8. On top of the stone enclosure were briars with sharp needles, to discourage the sheep from trying to jump over the wall, and to discourage predators from trying to get over the wall to steal, or hurt the sheep.
9. Central to the sheepfold was the door. The door, or sheep gate, was the focus point to gaining access to the sheep in the fold.

10. Through the door the sheep would enter into the fold. Through the door the sheep would exist the fold. Likewise for the shepherd.
11. Often, inside the sheepfold, several herds were gathered. Then, a gate keeper was appointed to guard the flock.
12. The gate keeper was not necessarily a shepherd. He might simply be a hireling to guard the sheep.
13. When a shepherd did come to the sheepfold to gather his sheep, it was done easily enough by the shepherd calling to the sheep. The sheep recognized the voice of their shepherd, and would follow him.
14. The first image Jesus used, in context, is to say, "I am the door." Initially, Jesus makes a distinction between the sheep gate keeper, and the shepherd. The sheep gate keeper, or porter, will open the door to the shepherd.
  - *John 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*
15. Once inside the sheepfold, the shepherd would stand in the middle of the herds and call his sheep, sometimes by name.
16. The sheep would respond by gathering around their shepherd. They wanted to be where he was. They follow him.
  - *John 10:4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*
17. The larger spiritual truth was conveying that God has a people. God has a flock of sheep.
18. In the kingdom of heaven they are safely in the fold. They will be forever secure, for Jesus is the sheep-gate. He is the door to the sheep fold. He is the one who leads His own into a mighty fortress.
19. By saying that He was the door to the sheep fold, Jesus was not being politically correct, or religiously sensitive.
20. In modern polite society, Christians are rebuked for declaring there is One Way to heaven. But they are correct.
21. Jesus did not say that the sheep fold had ten different doors, and each of them was equally valid. There was only one door, Jesus Christ.
  - *1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

- *Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*
  - *John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*
22. Nor did Jesus say that the sheep fold was inclusive. The sheep fold was for those who knew the voice of their shepherd. There is only one Shepherd.
23. The context for what Jesus was saying about the sheepfold was a healing miracle recorded in John 9.
24. Following his healing, the man who was healed of his blindness was rejected by the religious leaders, and cast out of the synagogue.
- *John 9:35 When Jesus heard the man had been cast out, he found him and said unto him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"*
25. The man responded by asking, "*Who is he, Lord that I might believe on him?*" (John 9:36).
26. It was at that moment Jesus revealed Himself, and the man believed, and worshipped Jesus.
- *John 9:37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*
27. Some Pharisees who were present for this transaction, and heard the words of Jesus, were offended. They perceived that Jesus was directing comments to them.
- *John 9:39 For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.*
28. With scathing sarcasm the Pharisees asked, "*Are we blind also?*" (John 9:40).
29. It was the wrong question to ask, for Christ immediately gave them an honest answer. Yes, they were blind.
- *John 9:41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*
30. The Pharisees were blind to the goodness of Jesus. A miracle had taken place in their midst, but they did not care. They were jealous that Jesus had performed the miracle and would get the glory, not them. They did not care that a member of their flock had been helped.
31. The Pharisees were not only blind, they were ignorant. They did not know the benefits of going to Christ as the Door of the Sheep Gate.

- 32.** Later, when the apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, he remembered the teaching of Jesus. Paul set forth two benefits of salvation.
- 33.** First, every soul has peace with God because of our justification. Second, every believer has access into God's grace. That is what a door does. It allows access. Paul taught what Jesus proclaimed about himself.
- *Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*
- 34.** The normal means of access is through a door. Jesus is the Door through which people enter into heaven, and into the presence of God.
- 35.** This imagery is tied to the whole image of the barrier to the access. In the Garden of Eden, God posted a centry in the person of two Cherubims with a flaming sword to guard the Tree of Life.
- *Genesis 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*
- 36.** In the Tabernacles, and later in the Temple, there was a barrier between men and God in the form of a curtain. Only the High Priest was allowed access into the Holy of Holies, and then, only one time a year.
- 37.** Sin is a barrier to God. The barrier of sin must be broken down before there is access to God. Christ provides that access.
- *Ephesians 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*
  - *Ephesians 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*
- 38.** Christ is the access. Christ is the door into the Holy of Holies. In Christ, every believer can go through the curtain into the Holy of Holies.
- *Hebrews 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*
- 39.** Do you believe this? Will you abandon, if necessary, society's pluralistic approach to religion? Are you willing to be controversial for Christ? Will you say, by faith, "Christ is the Door to salvation"? Will you affirm that, "Christ alone is the Sheep Gate." May God grant Christians holy boldness to teach others about the Great, I Am.