



Jesus the Way, the Cross, and the World according to the Gospel of John

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I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER except through me” (John 14:6). These words, which Jesus speaks to the disciples during the last supper according to John’s Gospel, are among the most memorable and disputed in the New Testament. For many, the statement that Jesus is the way is one of Christianity’s most essential teachings. It is heard as good news because it announces that through Jesus Christ one may relate rightly to God. For others, however, the idea that Jesus is the way is uncomfortably narrow. It is heard as an expression of Christian exclusivity that is awkward at best and dangerous at worst in a pluralistic world.¹

A large part of the problem arises from the repeated use of the word “the” in Jesus’ statement.² Many objections presumably would fade if we could modify the

¹For reflections on the differing perspectives see D. Moody Smith, “Prolegomena to a Canonical Reading of the Fourth Gospel,” in *What Is John?: Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996) 169-182, esp. 175-176; R. Alan Culpepper, “The Gospel of John as a Document of Faith in a Pluralistic Culture,” in *What is John?* 107-127, esp. 121-125.

²John’s Gospel ascribes seven sayings to Jesus that include the words “I am” followed by a descriptive element such as bread, light, a gate, a shepherd, resurrection, a way, or a vine. Studies of the historical Jesus frequently conclude that none of these are authentic sayings of Jesus. See recently the comments by Frank Schleritt in Gerd Lüdemann, *Jesus after 2000 Years: What He Really Said and Did* (London: SCM, 2000) 540, 695. On the complex question of John’s use of historical tradition see Marianne Meye Thompson, “The Historical Jesus and the Johannine Christ,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996) 21-42.

According to the internal logic of John’s Gospel, Jesus’ claim to be “the way, the truth, and the life” is a remarkably inclusive statement, with none of the exclusive character sometimes attributed to it.

passage so that Jesus would say, “I am a way, and a truth, and a life.” To call Jesus the bringer of “a way” among other ways and the bearer of “a truth” among other truths would be a rather modest claim that would probably elicit little opposition from those outside the Christian fold. Moreover, referring to Jesus as “a way” would ease the discomfort of those within the Christian community who want to avoid the impression that Christianity is exclusivistic. The difficulty with this approach, of course, is that the word “the” stubbornly appears before each of the three terms “way,” “truth,” and “life” in Greek as well as in English.

Understanding the passage involves coming to terms with its particularity, and the best way to do this is to think through the questions that have been raised about the Fourth Gospel’s presentation of Christ’s uniqueness.³ Although some sense that portraying Jesus as the way makes the gospel message too exclusive and insufficiently open, reading Jesus’ words in light of the theological dynamics of John’s Gospel suggests that the opposite is true. When each element of the saying is given due weight, Christ’s words are disturbingly inclusive and surprisingly open, but in ways that are often overlooked.

I. THE WAY AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

Jesus identifies himself as the way in John 14:6a, then explains what this means by making a statement about the human condition: “No one comes to the Father” (14:6b). This comment is perhaps the gospel’s most disturbingly inclusive claim, since the context makes clear that “no one” includes everyone. The assumption that underlies these words is that all people are separated from God. To say that “no one comes to the Father” assumes that all people are separated from the Father—otherwise there would be no need to come to him. This separation from God arises from human sin, and sin figures into the condition of every human being. To say that no one comes to the Father means that sin separates everyone from the Father.

Humanity’s separation from God is a persistent theme in John’s Gospel. When speaking of God’s Word, the prologue declares that “he was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him” (1:10). A cleft separates the human from the divine. Throughout the gospel Jesus addresses listeners who do not know God, who have never heard God’s voice and have never seen God’s form (5:27; 7:28; 8:19). God and his Son belong to the world above, whereas human beings belong to the world below, and the cleft between the divine and human realms is characterized by alienation. Jesus says to his opponents, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world,” and “I told you that you would die in your sins” (8:23-24). Therefore, when the Son of God crosses the divide and enters the world, the world hates him because he testifies that its works are evil (7:7). The statement that “no one comes to the Father” (14:6b) points to humanity’s estrangement from God.

³See also the reflections by Gail R. O’Day in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 9 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995) 743-745.

Because separation from God is a fundamentally *human* problem, it affects Jesus' followers as well as his foes. The disciples do not show the same kind of animosity that Jesus' opponents do, but the context of the comments about the way indicates that John's Gospel understands separation from God to be an issue for all people. Jesus addresses his followers in the same way that he previously addressed his adversaries when he tells them, "as I said to the Jews," who have shown opposition, "so now I say to *you*," who belong to the inner circle: "Where I am going, *you* cannot come" (13:33). At a fundamental level the disciples are in the same position as the Pharisees and temple police who tried to arrest Jesus (7:34; 8:21): none of them has any innate ability to go where Jesus goes.

The portrayal of individual disciples at the last supper reinforces the sense that Jesus addresses a fundamentally human problem. First, Peter protests, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you" (13:37). In reply Jesus discloses that Peter will deny him three times (13:37-38). When Peter, in the high priest's courtyard, denies that he is Jesus' disciple, he shows that he shares the condition that manifests itself in Jesus' Jewish opponents. Earlier in the gospel some of the Jewish leaders were asked whether they wanted to be included among Jesus' disciples, and they denied it, like Peter did (9:27-28). Second, Thomas interrupts Jesus' discourse by declaring, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" (14:5). Jesus was going to God, and Thomas's inability to understand this recalls the incomprehension that Jesus' adversaries showed earlier when they asked, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him?" and "What does he mean by saying... 'Where I am you cannot come?'" (7:35-36; 8:22). Third, Philip says, "Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied" (14:8). The request indicates that at this point Philip is not satisfied, and his words echo previous scenes in which Jesus' Jewish opponents demanded to know, "Where is your Father?" (8:19). Accordingly, Jesus' response is poignant: "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?" (14:9).

The words "no one comes to the Father" (14:6b) level the distinctions between people by directing attention to the separation from God that all human beings share. This negative assessment of humanity's situation is the presupposition for the gospel's positive presentation of Jesus as the way. The Fourth Evangelist presses readers to see the depth of human estrangement from God and to understand the person and work of Christ as God's response to that estrangement.

John's Gospel does not identify Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life in order to close off relationships with God, but to open up relationships with God where sin has created separation (14:6a). The word "except" in the phrase "except by me" (14:6c) means that the categorical judgment that "no one comes to the Father" is not the last word (14:6b). The word "except" introduces the prospect of relationship with God despite human estrangement from God. "Except" is like a window that lets light into a closed room. The term is congruent with what the gospel says about Christ coming as light into a world of darkness (1:5, 9; 3:19) and

serving as the door or gate that enables people to enter God's sheepfold (10:7-10). Rather than restricting access to God the word "except" creates access to God.

The interplay between an unequivocal judgment on the human separation from God and a promise of new relationship with God is part of the fabric of John's Gospel. One of the gospel's most memorable characters is Nicodemus, who speaks as a Pharisee (3:1), as one of the crowd (3:2; cf. 2:23), and finally as a representative of a benighted humanity (3:19).⁴ Jesus speaks categorically when he says to Nicodemus, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God" (3:3a). After hearing Nicodemus's reply, Jesus reiterates his judgment by saying, "no one can enter the kingdom of God" (3:5a). Both sayings presuppose that the human condition is one of separation from God's kingdom. To say that "no one" can see or enter the kingdom means that everyone begins at a point outside the kingdom.

Against the backdrop of this negative judgment Jesus inserts the word "unless." The word "unless," like the "except" in 14:6, provides for relationship with God in the face of separation from God. To say that "no one" can enter or even see God's kingdom makes an unequivocally negative assessment of human capacities to relate fully and rightly to God. Adding that this is true "unless" he or she is born anew (3:3b, 5b) points to the prospect of a relationship where one would otherwise be impossible. Being born anew means coming to faith, which is why "believing" is mentioned so often in this passage (3:12, 15, 16, 18). Believing is a relational notion in John's Gospel; it is the way people relate rightly to God. Faith is evoked by the Spirit (3:6) through the message that God so loved the world that he gave his Son to suffer and die in order to redeem it (3:16).

Similar dynamics appear in John 6, where Jesus speaks to representatives of the multitude that he had fed with five loaves and two fish. In the middle of his discourse, Jesus makes the categorical judgment that "no one can come to me" (6:44a), using "come" as a synonym for faith (cf. 6:35). The crowd's demeanor bears out his statement. Jesus transformed the five loaves and two fish into a meal for five thousand people with plenty left over (6:1-15), yet they continued to demand a sign in order that they might believe (6:30). Their insistence on signs, after having been given a sign, discloses their inability to perceive the presence and work of God, whose power was manifested through the Son whom he sent (6:27, 29, 32, 33). They not only do not come, but evidently lack the ability to come, for the text says that "no one *can*" do so (οὐδεὶς δύναται, 6:44a). The evangelist underscores the depth of the problem by noting how the people "complained" or "murmured" against Jesus, using a word that was associated with the contemporaries of Moses (γογγύζειν, 6:41, 43). Moses' generation had benefited from divine actions like the deliverance at the Red Sea, the gift of water from the rock, and a daily provision of manna, the bread from heaven (Exod 14:21-31; 16:4; 17:1-7). Yet they persistently complained and refused to trust God (Exod 16:7; 17:3; Num 14:27, 29). The

⁴On character portrayal in John and on Nicodemus as a representative of humanity, see Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 45-48.

parallels between the wilderness generation and the crowd fed by Jesus indicate the persistence of human estrangement from God.

Jesus tells the crowd that “no one can come,” making a negative pronouncement on the human condition (John 6:44a), but this judgment is met again by the word “unless” (6:44b). Taken on its own the statement that “no one can come” means that relationships with God and the Christ whom God sent are impossible. Yet, adding “unless the Father who sent me draws” the person means that relationships can occur when God acts to overcome the barrier that separates the human from the divine. God “draws” (ἐλκύειν) people to Jesus and so to himself by communicating with them, according to 6:45. Later, readers learn more specifically that people are “drawn” to Christ by the power of his being lifted up in crucifixion, as well as by his resurrection and return to the Father (12:32-33).⁵ According to John’s Gospel, Christ’s death and resurrection are means by which God communicates his love to the world and thereby draws the world back into relationship with himself.

II. THE WAY OF THE CROSS AND RESURRECTION

Calling Jesus “the way” points to the prospect of a relationship with God in the face of the negative judgment that “no one comes to the Father.” The image of the way can best be understood by noting that Jesus spoke about *going the way* himself before he spoke about *being the way* for others. Focusing initially on what it means for Jesus to go the way casts into relief what it means for Jesus to be the way. Jesus’ own journey is mentioned repeatedly in John 13-14, and in typically Johannine fashion his statements encompass multiple dimensions of meaning.⁶ Accordingly, when Jesus speaks of “where I am going” (13:33, 36), his words can be taken on two levels: his destination and his route. Each level merits consideration.

First, we can consider what the gospel says about Jesus’ destination. During his public ministry Jesus speaks of going to the one who sent him (7:33-34). Bystanders in the story find these remarks opaque, but the evangelist gives readers enough information to know that God sent Jesus (5:23-24; 6:38-39). Therefore, when Jesus speaks of going to the one who sent him, readers understand that he refers to his return to the Father. Similarly, the comments that introduce John’s account of the last supper repeat that Jesus has come from God and is going to God (13:1, 3). After piquing the disciples’ curiosity about where he is going, Jesus tells of preparing a place for them in his Father’s house with its many rooms (14:2-4). Readers who follow these cues will respond to the question, “Where is Jesus going?” (13:36; 14:5) by saying, “He is going to God.”

⁵On the verb “lift up” (ὑψοῦν), see J. Terence Forstell, *The Word of the Cross: Salvation as Revelation in the Fourth Gospel*, *Analecta biblica* 57 (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974) 61-65; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John*, 3 vols., trans. Kevin Smyth (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968-1984) 2:399-401.

⁶On the close connection between John 13 and 14, see Fernando F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word: The Johannine Call to Abide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 59-68. On multiple meanings in John, see Koester, *Symbolism*, 1-31.

Second, we must note the route that Jesus will take to his destination. Jesus speaks about where he is going in contexts that mention the prospect of arrest and the coming “hour” of the passion (7:30, 34; 8:20-21). When the evangelist later tolls the hour of Jesus’ return to the Father, readers learn that the path Jesus follows will pass through betrayal (13:1-2). After Judas leaves the company of disciples and plunges into the night in order to carry out the betrayal, Jesus speaks about glorification and going where no one else can go (13:30-33). According to John’s Gospel, Jesus’ glorification and return to the Father take place through his dying and rising (12:23-24).⁷ Peter unwittingly accents the fact that Jesus is going on a course that will lead through death by declaring that he will follow Jesus and lay down his life for him, which prompts Jesus to foretell Peter’s denial (13:36-37). These cues in the text enable readers to respond to the question, “Where is Jesus going?” by saying, “He is going the way of the cross.”⁸

John 14 begins by identifying Jesus’ destination as his Father’s house, but when Jesus introduces the term “way” in the statement “You know the way where I am going” (14:4),⁹ he focuses attention on the way of crucifixion and resurrection that will lead to that destination. As the narrative unfolds, Jesus goes to the garden where he is arrested, then to the high priest’s house where he is questioned, and to the headquarters of the Roman governor where he is scourged. He follows the way out of the city, bearing his own cross, and is crucified at Golgotha. Death and entombment are followed by resurrection—and all of this belongs to the way by which he returns to the Father (20:17).

The disciples do not understand the way of Jesus prior to the passion, as Thomas makes clear by objecting, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” (14:5). Jesus tells Thomas that he is the way by which people come to know and to see God the Father (14:6-7), but only after Good Friday and Easter, when the risen Jesus shows Thomas the marks of crucifixion, are the words of John 14 realized in Thomas’s confession, “My Lord and my God” (20:28). The significance of Jesus’ saying about the way emerges after his death and resurrection, just as the gospel indicates that his comments about the destruction and resurrection of the temple (2:21-22) and his washing of the disciples’ feet (13:7) can only be understood in light of the passion through the work of the Spirit (14:26).¹⁰

Jesus says “I am the way” (14:6) after he has spoken about going the way him-

⁷On glorification, see Forstell, *The Word of the Cross*, 73-74; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:401-404; C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953) 207-208.

⁸John Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1975) 41, 47; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina 4 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998) 395, and *Glory Not Dishonor: Reading John 13-21* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998) 36.

⁹The NRSV paraphrases 14:4 to read, “And you know the way to the place where I am going.” The words “to the place” do not appear in Greek.

¹⁰John’s Gospel mentions Thomas only in 11:16, 14:5, and 20:24-29. There are literary and theological relationships between these passages. On retrospect in John, see Jean Zumstein, *Kreative Erinnerung: Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium* (Zürich: Pano, 1999) 46-61.

self (14:4). By going the way of the cross and resurrection he comes to embody the way of the cross and resurrection. To call Jesus “the way” is to call him “the crucified and risen one.” The term “way” is evocative, and, like light, water, bread, and other key Johannine images, it brings to mind associations from various sources while reshaping these associations in relation to Jesus’ passion.¹¹ Earlier, John the Baptist invoked the image of the way from the book of Isaiah when he called himself “the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord’” (1:23; Isa 40:3). Although the other gospels link the Lord’s way to the call to repentance (Matt 3:2-3; Mark 1:2-4; Luke 3:3-4), the Fourth Gospel says that John the Baptist makes straight “the way of the Lord” by bearing witness to Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Thus the promise of the way, which is mentioned in Isaiah, finds its realization in Jesus’ death for the sake of others.¹²

At the last supper the image of the way is introduced with the words “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι), which recall how God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush by saying, “I am who I am” (Exod 3:14). The divine connotations of the “I am,” which appear in various Old Testament passages, are developed in John’s Gospel.¹³ In some contexts the words are used in an absolute, ungrammatical sense in which the divine element is clear. For example, when Jesus says, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58), the crowd recognizes the allusion to God’s name and attempts to stone Jesus for blasphemy. In other passages the “I am” is used with an implied predicate, so that it is often translated “I am he” or “It is I.” Nevertheless, when Jesus utters the “I am” in this manner in the garden of Gethsemane, his adversaries fall to the ground, apparently in response to the numinous quality of the words (18:5-6). Finally, the “I am” is coupled with images such as bread, light, a door, a shepherd, resurrection, and a vine. In these statements the revelatory quality of the expression persists, so that by saying “I am” Jesus not only identifies who he is but indicates how he reveals God’s power and presence.

Taken together, the two halves of the statement “I am the way” announce that Jesus reveals God through his death and resurrection. The “I am” in the first half of the saying echoes the name of God and, like the other “I am” passages in John’s Gospel, indicates that God is made known in Christ. Reference to “the way” in the second half develops what Jesus has intimated about going the way of the cross and

¹¹Note for example how the image of bread from heaven, which recalls traditions about manna (Exod 16:4), is understood in terms of Jesus’ giving his flesh for the world through his crucifixion (John 6:51). Similarly, the gospel indicates that the truly good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep even though this action was not commonly understood to be the mark of good shepherding (10:11). John’s Gospel develops the shepherd image in light of the cross.

¹²See also Isa 42:16; 43:19; 48:17; 49:9, 11; 57:15; 62:10; David Mark Ball, “I Am” in *John’s Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 124 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 232-240.

¹³For example, the Greek translation of the Old Testament reads, “I am and there is no god beside me” (Deut 32:39) and “I am and there is no other” (Isa 45:18). On the uses of “I am” in John’s Gospel, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 2 vols., Anchor Bible 29-29A (New York: Doubleday, 1966-1970) 1:533-538; Ball, “I Am” in *John’s Gospel*, 146-176.

resurrection in order to show that Jesus comes to embody the way of the cross and resurrection.

III. THE WAY IN A PLURALISTIC WORLD

Asking “For whom is Jesus the way?” in a pluralistic context means considering the prior question, “For whom did Jesus go the way?” or more pointedly, “For whom did Christ die?” According to John’s Gospel, Jesus went the way of the cross for all people. In the opening chapter, John the Baptist foreshadows “the way of the Lord” (1:23) by pointing to “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29). Using the term “world” (κόσμος) emphasizes the scope of Christ’s mission. Christ sacrificed himself for all because sin, which separates people from God, is part of the human condition. According to John’s Gospel, Jesus dies as “the Lamb of God” when he is crucified on the day of preparation for Passover, when the Passover lambs are slain (19:14). And the conviction that Christ dies for the sake of the world is underscored by the sign above the cross, which proclaims Christ’s identity in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek for all the world to see (19:20).

The way of the cross is the way of divine love. It was because “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” to suffer, die, and rise, “so that whosoever believes in him might not perish but have eternal life” (3:16). When Jesus reveals God by going the way of the cross, he manifests God’s love for a world alienated from its Creator. Human beings are capable of recognizing that the greatest expression of love is to lay down one’s life on behalf of someone else (15:13). Accordingly, Jesus went to the cross not only to show his own love for his followers (13:1) but also to reveal the love of the God who sent him in order that the world’s relationship with God might be restored (3:16). The absolute quality of the statement “I am the way” expresses the absolute quality of God’s love for the world.¹⁴

Calling Jesus not only “the way” but also “the truth” (14:6) further describes what he reveals by going the way of the cross and resurrection.¹⁵ According to the prologue, the Word of God entered the world, became flesh, and revealed divine glory as “grace and truth” (1:14). Jesus manifested God’s glory during his public ministry by acts of power (17:4), but ultimately he was glorified through death and resurrection, the events by which grace and truth “came” or more literally “happened” (ἐγένετο, 1:17). Shortly before his crucifixion, Jesus tells Pilate that he has come into the world to bear witness to the truth (18:37). When Pilate replies, “What is truth?” (18:38), Jesus responds not so much by words as by going the way of the cross, which is the consummate form of testimony to the truth. To know the truth that sets people free from bondage to sin (8:31-34) is to know the love of God that Christ reveals. By going the way of the cross and resurrection to reveal the truth of God, Christ comes to embody the way and the truth.

¹⁴Udo Schnelle, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 4 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998) 228-229.

¹⁵On the revelatory quality of “truth,” see Brown, *John*, 2:630; Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:237.

“Life,” which elaborates what it means for Jesus to be the way and the truth, is a relational expression.¹⁶ True life means life in relationship with the God who is true (3:33, 36). Life has a physical dimension but is not limited to what is physical. People who are alive in a bodily sense pass “from death to life” when they come to believe what Jesus reveals of God (5:24). In the Fourth Gospel, “life” is often synonymous with “eternal life,” since authentic life comes through knowing the eternal God (17:3). Life is a relationship that begins in faith and continues beyond death into everlasting life through resurrection (5:29). By his crucifixion and resurrection Jesus reveals the divine love that draws people into the relationship with God that is true life.

When Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life,” he speaks of a gift that is extended to all human beings whom sin has separated from God. This saying, like the other “I am” statements, announces what God offers to the world. When Jesus says, “I am the bread of life” (6:35), he means that he is “the bread of God...which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” that hungers, through the crucifixion of his flesh (6:33, 51). When he says, “I am the light of the world,” he indicates that he came to give “the light of life” to all who experience the darkness of sin and death, and he demonstrates this gift by bringing light to the eyes of a man born blind (8:12; 9:5-7). When Jesus says, “I am the gate,” he explains that he came that people might be saved and have life abundant (10:7-10); the context emphasizes that as the gate Jesus opens up a way for those who would otherwise be shut out, like the man expelled from the synagogue (9:34). When he says, “I am the good shepherd,” he promises to give eternal life to his sheep by laying down his life for them (10:11, 28). When he says, “I am the resurrection and the life,” he emphasizes what he gives to all who believe (11:25-26). When he says, “I am the true vine,” he calls people to abide in him because he will sustain them with divine love (15:1, 4, 9).

The words “I am” beckon readers to begin theological reflection by considering who Christ is and what he has done. This has the strange effect of reversing the usual questions that emerge from a reading of John’s Gospel. Beginning with the world’s many traditions and truth claims makes it natural to ask how anyone can say that Jesus is “the way,” because from this perspective the gospel’s claims seem uncomfortably narrow. Beginning with the gospel’s internal logic, however, discloses that Jesus is the way because he went the way of the cross and resurrection. This makes it natural to ask whether there is anyone for whom Christ did *not* die. If Christ went the way of the cross for all people, then saying that Christ died for some but not for all would be an uncomfortable narrowing of what Christ has done. Again, it seems exclusivistic to say that Jesus is “the way,” yet the gospel calls Jesus “the way” because Jesus went the way of the cross to reveal God’s love for the world that was estranged from him. Accordingly, it would be exclusivistic to say

¹⁶Brown, *John*, 2:631, who notes that people are to belong to the truth (John 18:37); Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:352-361.

that Jesus is the way for some but not all, for it would mean that Jesus reveals God's love only for some but not for all. If all people are separated from God—for “no one comes to the Father” (14:6b)—then Jesus goes the way of the cross and resurrection and embodies the way of the cross and resurrection to overcome this estrangement by the revelation of God's love. ⊕

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