

The Strait Gate and the Narrow Way (Matthew 7:13-14)

Introduction:

1. Throughout His Sermon Jesus revealed His will on numerous subjects.
2. He gave positive instructions for us to practice, and He dealt with some things that we are to avoid.
3. Some of the Lord's instructions involve paying a high price, including:
 - a. the treatment of enemies (5:44)
 - b. deciding who we are going to serve (6:24)
 - c. seeking God's kingdom first (6:33)
 - d. entering the strait gate and traveling the narrow way (7:13-14).
4. As He began to conclude His Sermon, Jesus emphasized the importance of complying with His will, regardless of the price that must be paid.
 - a. (7:21-23) Only those who do God's will can enter His kingdom.
 - b. (7:24-27) A wise man and a foolish man are contrasted.
 - 1) A wise man hears and does the Lord's words.
 - 2) A foolish man does not obey the Lord's words.
5. In our lesson we are concentrating on the Lord's instructions concerning "the strait gate and the narrow way" (7:13-14).

Discussion:

I. THE LORD WANTS US TO ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE

- A. "Enter" implies effort on our part.
 1. The strait gate cannot be entered by accident -- it requires conscious, deliberate effort.
 2. (Luke 13:24) Jesus said that we must "strive" to enter it.
- B. The "strait" gate is fixed [like a narrow gorge hemmed in between rocks].
 1. Limitations indicate that a person must pay the price to go through this gate.
 - a. (Matthew 5:29-30) Certain things must be given up.
 - b. (Matthew 16:24) Self must be denied, and crosses must be carried.
 2. Paying the price to enter the strait gate is worthwhile because it leads to eternal life.
- C. To help us understand what is involved in entering the strait gate,:
 1. Heaven is pictured as having 12 gates (Revelation 21:10-13).
 2. Only certain ones will be allowed to enter (Revelation 21:27; 22:14).
- D. There is a "wide gate," but it leads to destruction.
- E. In addition to entering in at the strait gate, . . .

II. THE LORD WANTS US TO TRAVEL THE NARROW WAY

- A. The "narrow" way also indicates that there are limitations.
 1. (John 14:6) Jesus is "the way," and the only way to get to the Father is through Him.
 2. There are not many ways -- there is only one, and that way is narrow.
- B. Years earlier, Isaiah prophesied about "the way of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8-10).
 1. There would be no unclean people on this way of holiness.
 2. Only the redeemed and the ransomed would travel this way to Zion.
 3. In Zion, those who traveled this way would be blessed.
- C. There is a "broad way," but it leads to destruction.
- D. The Lord wants us to enter in at the strait gate, and He wants us to travel the narrow way; however, . . .

III. ONLY A FEW WILL FOLLOW THE LORD'S INSTRUCTIONS

- A. "Many" will go to destruction, whereas "few" will find life.
- B. To illustrate, out of all the people living on the earth at the time of the flood, only 8 were saved in the ark (Genesis 7:13).
- C. Why? Only 8 precious souls were willing to enter in at the strait gate and travel the narrow way.

Conclusion:

1. Everyone will appear before Christ in judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10).
2. Where we spend eternity will be determined by which gate we entered and which way we traveled.