

# THE STRAIT AND NARROW WAY

BIBLE TEXT : Luke 13:23-30; Matthew 7:13, 14

LESSON 147 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE: "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14).**

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### **Luke 13:23-30**

<sup>23</sup> Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

<sup>24</sup> Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

<sup>25</sup> When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

<sup>26</sup> Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

<sup>27</sup> But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

<sup>28</sup> There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

<sup>29</sup> And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

<sup>30</sup> And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

### **Matthew 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> 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

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### **I The Strait Gate to the Kingdom**

1 One of the people asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Luke 13:23

2 Jesus answered, saying that all men should strive to enter in at the strait gate, Luke 13:24; Matthew 7:13, 14;

#### **John 6:27**

<sup>27</sup> Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

#### **2 Peter 1:10**

<sup>10</sup> Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

3 There is coming a time when the door to the strait and narrow way will be shut, Luke 13:24, 25;

#### **Matthew 25:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

<sup>11</sup> Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

<sup>12</sup> But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

### **II Outside the Door**

1 The workers of iniquity will be shut outside the Kingdom of God, Luke 13:26, 27;

#### **Romans 9:31-33**

<sup>31</sup> But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

<sup>32</sup> Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

<sup>33</sup> As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

#### **Romans 10:3**

<sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

#### **2 Timothy 3:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

<sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

<sup>3</sup> Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are god,

<sup>4</sup> Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

<sup>5</sup> Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

#### **Titus 1:16**

<sup>16</sup> They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

thereat:

<sup>14</sup> Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

2 The punishment of the wicked will be more acute when they behold the inhabitants of the Kingdom, and they themselves are thrust out, Luke 13:28;

**Luke 16:23**

<sup>23</sup> And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

**Revelation 21:8**

<sup>8</sup> But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

### III The Universal Call

1 Many shall hear the call of God in all parts of the world and shall come and sit down in the Kingdom, Luke 13:29;

**Isaiah 43:5-7**

<sup>5</sup> Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

<sup>6</sup> I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

<sup>7</sup> *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

**Revelation 7:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

<sup>10</sup> And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

2 "There are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last," Luke 13:30;

**Matthew 3:9**

<sup>9</sup> And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

**Matthew 8:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>12</sup> But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

### NOTES:

#### **The Abode of God and the Redeemed**

Heaven is a high and holy place — the place where God dwells. Its splendors are stated in the Bible with the most descriptive words that the English language affords. This Celestial City is made of pure gold, so pure that it is like unto clear glass, and even the streets are paved with that same gold. The twelve gates are made of twelve pearls, and the foundations are of precious stones. The sun or the moon will not shine here, for the glory of God will light the City, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.

With this wonderful picture before us, still the Word declares, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9). This beautiful place will be the abode of God and His saints throughout the countless,

ceaseless ages of eternity. Is there anyone who does not want to dwell in that wondrous City of God when this present life is over? None need be excluded from Heaven, because the price of redemption has been paid for the whole world; and everyone who seeks redemption with a sincere heart, and with repentance for sin, will be saved.

### **Few Saved**

The man who came to Jesus asking, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" seemed to be interested in his eternal welfare. No doubt he was a man of the Jewish nation, and the Jewish doctors of the Law said that all Israel should have a place in God's Kingdom. The children of Abraham placed the hope of their salvation on the faithfulness of their parent. They trusted in their heritage to see them safely through to Heaven; but it was a vain hope, and this man seemed to realize it. The same is true today. Those children who are trusting only in the prayers of a Christian father or mother for salvation are open to disappointment, for each man must do his own praying. God said that when He would bring judgment upon the land, "though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness" (Ezekiel 14:20).

There is only one way to God and Heaven, and that is through the strait gate, which is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Jesus' Blood was spilled for the sins of all men, everywhere, but the Blood must be applied to the heart of each individual before it can avail for his sins.

### **The Strait Gate**

Jesus did not answer His questioner directly. However, Jesus' answer illustrated very forcefully that the man who expects to be saved has something to do, and that there are comparatively few who are willing to do it. Admission to Heaven will require more than a feeble, halfhearted, listless effort. Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." The admonition means literally striving as in agony. In other words, agonize, if need be, to enter in at the strait gate. This is the only way "which leadeth unto life," and all who are saved will travel this way. The rewards of faithful service will by far exceed any price the pilgrim ever will be called upon to pay. Entering in at the strait gate means the same thing as Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The whole man undergoes a change: he repents of his sins; God forgives and removes those sins; and the man is a new creation. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

### **The Narrow Way**

Jesus is the Strait Gate. The narrow way, then, is the way of holiness. The way is as clean as the gate, and not one degree wider. The way is not narrow in the sense that it is a hard way, or uninteresting. Those who are pilgrims on this way are the happiest people in the world. They have found a meaning in life and a desired goal to attain. The world holds no terrors for the true Christian, and death has lost its sting. Why shouldn't he be happy?

The way is narrow in that it excludes all sin. "And an

highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there" (Isaiah 35:8, 9). The way does not broaden as it leads toward Heaven. If anything, the way becomes narrower as it nears the Golden City, but the traveler is Well accustomed to the way, and he goes rejoicing in the narrow way.

### **Not Far Enough**

The people of whom Jesus spoke, who "will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," are those who take some action toward salvation, but who will perish because they do not go far enough. They likely saw the gate, and respected the way, but they came short of grace and glory because they rested in occasional seeking for that which could be attained only by laborious striving. Others may have depended upon having their names on a church roll, but Jesus said their names must be written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

One fact is certain: This group of people did not seek in earnest to make their calling and election sure while the door of mercy was open. Once the Master had risen up and had shut the door, then these people came and strove for admission. Gone was their occasional or dilatory seeking. They became sincere in their prayers, but they were not able to enter now, because their prayers came too late.

### **"Lord, Lord"**

That these people were not ignorant of Jesus and of His way is shown by the plea that they used. "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." They admitted that they had listened to the Gospel story, and had heard the call of Christ in their heart; but they had failed to heed sufficiently. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). All the while that they had been feigning Christianity, they had continued in the broad way, for Jesus said, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." How careful every man should be to cherish the call of God, to strive earnestly to enter the strait gate, and then walk diligently along the narrow way until the door of Heaven closes safely behind him!

Note the degree of anguish that comes to those who are shut out of the Kingdom. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The Old Testament saints and prophets will be admitted into the Kingdom of God and enjoy the benefits of it, because through faith they foresaw the day of Christ and received the merits of His shed Blood. Seeing the saints and prophets of all ages enjoying the blessings of Heaven and knowing that they themselves have been thrust out, will add to the misery of the lost.

### **The Call of Christ**

The sound of the Gospel will travel into all parts of the earth, and people shall come from the East, West, North, and South, and shall sit down in the Kingdom. The call of Christ is going out universally today. Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). Portions of the Bible have been translated into more than 1,100 languages

and dialects, and the Gospel is preached in practically every known land. Is not the end at hand?

The strange truth of the whole matter is that the so-called heathen, though under gross darkness and superstition for untold generations, embrace the teachings of the Gospel more readily than do the people of the Christian lands. This is the verification of the verse, "Behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last." Many who have had the light of the Gospel for years but did not take advantage of it will be rejected and cast out. Others who never had an opportunity, who seemed to be lost from their very beginning yet embraced redemption when it was presented, will be among the first citizens of God's Kingdom.

### **Opposite Gates and Opposite Ways**

Thus we see the wondrous beauty and the attraction of the strait gate and narrow way. We see the desirable goal at the end of the way and realize that the attainment of that goal comes only through striving for it. All who will not travel the narrow way are automatically traveling the broad way of which Jesus spoke.

Consider for a moment the wide gate and the broad way, the gate of sin and the way of wickedness. The way may seem smooth to travel, for somebody has said that the way to hell is paved with good intentions; but the broad way leads only to destruction. Death, eternal death and punishment, lies at the end of this way.

These two ways do not lie parallel to each other; they lie in opposite directions. It lies within man's own choice as to which way he will journey. The matter is plainly set before us: the strait gate, the narrow way, and life; or the wide gate, the broad way, and destruction. The better choice is so clear that it cannot be debated. The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 What was the question that one of the crowd asked Jesus?
- 2 How did Jesus answer this man?
- 3 What did Jesus mean when He said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate"?
- 4 Are there many people who do enter the strait gate?
- 5 What happens to the people who do not enter the strait gate?
- 6 What beautiful place is at the end of the narrow way?
- 7 To what place does the wide gate and the broad way lead?
- 8 Which of these two ways do you think is the better? Are you on that way?