
TWO GATES – TWO WAYS

George Battey | 3/10/14

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What does the "*broad way*" offer immediately?
- 2) In vv13-27 what number is prominent?
- 3) What OT prophets offered people choices that were in the form of ultimatums?
- 4) What sign is above both the "*narrow way*" and the "*broad way*"?
- 5) Jesus is contrasting two kinds of ... (what) in vv13-14?
- 6) How many wrong answers are there to a math equation and how many right answers are there?
- 7) What two purposes does a gate serve?
- 8) Did Jesus say few would "*find*" the narrow way or did He say few would "*enter*" the narrow way?

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

¹⁴ "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Verses 13-27 mark the end of Jesus' "*sermon on the mount.*" He has been describing the "*righteousness which exceeds*" (5:20) and now He begins exhorting men to obey it.

Men have a choice of accepting the "*exceeding righteousness,*" or rejecting it.

Jesus is warning men of the consequences of either choice. There will be hardships on either path.

- **The narrow way** – offers hardships immediately, but life in the end.
- **The broad way** – offers comfort and ease immediately, but hardships in the end.

TWO DISTINCT WAYS

Jesus begins this section of warning and exhortation with the fact that there are two distinct ways for men to choose. There are no gray areas. In this chapter He points out that there are:

- 2 gates: the narrow and wide
- 2 ways: the narrow and broad
- 2 destinations: life and destruction
- 2 groups: the few and the many
- 2 trees: the good and the bad
- 2 fruits: the good and the bad
- 2 kinds of believers: the sincere and the false
- 2 builders: the wise and the foolish
- 2 foundations: the rock and the sand
- 2 houses: the secure and the insecure
- 2 elements in the storm: wind and water

On other occasions Jesus repeatedly emphasized there was only two available choices for the lives of men:

Matthew 12:30

³⁰ "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

Matthew 25:32-33

³² "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

³³ "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Over and over again Jesus reiterates this fact.

OT PROPHETS

Jesus, however, was not alone, nor was He the first to declare there are but two distinct ways:

1) Moses (before he died)

Deuteronomy 30:19

¹⁹ "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that **I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing**; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;

2) Joshua (before he died)

Joshua 24:15

¹⁵ "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

3) Elijah (on Matthew Carmel)

1 Kings 18:21

²¹ And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "**How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.**" But the people answered him not a word.

4) Jeremiah (when Jerusalem was threatened)

Jeremiah 21:8

⁸ "Now you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD: "**Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.**"

The very fact that men were offered choices proves that man was a "*free will*" and has not been predestined either to heaven, or to hell.

TEXT (1)

Matthew 7:13

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

The emphasis here is not whether to enter or not. Everyone will enter one gate, or the other. The emphasis is on choosing the right gate.

We don't have a choice of not entering either gate. To refuse entrance on one gate automatically pushes one into the other.

When young boys and girls become accountable before God for their actions they must choose either a lifestyle that leads to heaven, or one that leads to hell.

(That's a pretty big decision for a young person isn't it? But Jesus declares it must be made. To not make a decision is a decision in itself – a decision for the way to destruction.)

Now there is a time period in which the decision may be reversed.

- **One on the broad way may come to regret his original choice.** While time permits, he may retrace his steps and enter the narrow way.
- **One on the narrow way may come to regret his original choice too.** Unfortunately he may retrace his steps to the broad way.

But there comes a time when neither gate may be entered.

Luke 13:25

²⁵ "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,'

"THIS WAY TO HEAVEN"

Now the amazing thing that many do not realize is that both the broad way and the narrow way have a sign reading: "***This way to heaven.***"

Satan doesn't mark his road: "***This way to hell.***" That's not very deceiving. He marks his road: "***This way to heaven.***"

(Both roads offer life to their travelers, but only one delivers.)

The difference between the two roads is not to be determined by subjective methods (feelings, or intuition). Rather, these roads are distinguished by objective revelation – by God's word.

ILL: You hop in a car to go some place you've never been before (New York). How are you going to get there. "Oh, I'm just going to rely on gut feelings."

Listen ... unless you use a map you'll surely end up lost!

Unless we rely on God's book (His map) we will never arrive to that country where we've never been before.

TWO KINDS OF RELIGION

Now ... it's important for us to see the contrast Jesus is making here, or we will miss the whole point.

Jesus is not contrasting irreligion with religion; paganism with Christianity. Many see the narrow way as Christianity and the broad way as irreligious people.

Many see the broad way as:

- Drunken orgies
- Excessive lasciviousness

- Ungodliness
- Immorality at every turn
- People who are openly and merrily on their way to hell!

Instead, Jesus is contrasting two kinds of religion:

- **True religion**
- **False religion.**

The people on the broad way think they are on the narrow way. This fact becomes more apparent in Luke's parallel passage:

Luke 13

²⁴ "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

²⁶ "then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.'

²⁷ "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'

Notice these people on the broad way thought they were on the narrow way. They were religious and considered themselves to have had communion with Jesus.

This then clearly defines for us the two ways.

- **Narrow way = doing the Father's will**
- **Broad way = doing our own will**

NOTE: People who are ungodly and irreligious are on the way to hell, no one denies that. But the point Jesus wants to emphasize is that some very devout religious people are there too.

The choice then is clear: We either submit to God's way of doing things in religion, or we substitute our own way.

Judges 21:25

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

This is what makes the broad way broad and the narrow way narrow. Truth is narrow on any point, but error includes all the rest.

ILL: 2 + 2. Only one right answer, but a million wrong answers.

Likewise, there is only one right way to worship. Only one right way to live for God! But there are a million wrong ways and that is why the broad way is broad – it accommodates the million and one wrong ways.

This tends to bother us. We like to think hell will be only for arch-villains of society, but Jesus says hell is for men who refuse to submit to God's will!

"BROADMINDEDNESS"

Those on the broad way pride themselves on their broadmindedness and their liberality, but they resent anyone who suggests things may not be well with them.

John Stott:

"There is plenty of room on [the broad way] for diversity of opinions and laxity of morals. It is the road of tolerance and permissiveness. It has no curbs, no boundaries of either thought or conduct. Travelers on this road follow their own inclinations ..." (194).

These people on the broad way have a million and one ways of how to worship and serve God. Not only do they differ from the Bible, but they differ from one another.

The only thing folks are united on is in opposing the right ways of the Lord.

They have never taken seriously the words Jesus taught men to pray:

Matthew 6:10

¹⁰ Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

THE BROAD WAY IS POPULAR

Matthew 7:13

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for **wide is the gate and broad is the way** that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

What makes this broad way so popular?

FIRST: (As we said before) **Men can "do their own thing."** Every man does "*what is right in his own eyes,*" and that's very appealing.

SECOND: **The wide gate allows men to come in groups.** There are no individual requirements, or commitments.

You can bring all your baggage:

- all your immorality
- all your self-indulgence
- all your lack of repentance

It's a broad way and everyone can jump on the bandwagon and go happily down the road together and there's a certain feeling of security in knowing you're with the majority.

THIRD: **The broad way allows plenty of room to stop and rest.** One can sit on the side and simply "do nothing" because its wide and there's plenty of room to just sit.

DESTRUCTION

But Jesus said this broad way leads to destruction.

Some think "destruction" means **annihilation**. NO!

This word means:

- the complete **loss of "well-being"**

- NOT: the complete loss of being.

Were it not for this eternal loss of "well-being," there would be absolutely no reason to choose the narrow way.

TEXT (2)

Matthew 7:14

¹⁴ "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

"narrow" (στενή) – "narrow, constricted"

According to scholars it resembles a *"turnstile"* at a supermarket which allows only one person at a time to pass through.

This gate serves two purposes:

- **to let certain men in**
- **to keep certain men out**

Matthew 7:21

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Those who refuse to submit to God's will are kept out by the gate, but those who submit to *"His righteousness"* are let through.

The gate serves as an entrance to a way of life.

- **Narrow gate** = initial obedience to the gospel
- **Narrow way** = continued life of submission to God's will

There are four things about the gate I want you to notice:

FIRST: We must enter NOW.

There is a sense of urgency. We must enter and we must do it now while we have the opportunity.

Luke 13:25

²⁵ "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,'

The opportunity may soon be gone!

SECOND: We must enter ALONE.

The Jews had a mistaken idea that when the Messianic Kingdom arrived they would be ushered into it as a group. They believed that their fleshly relationship to Abraham was enough to grant them entrance into the kingdom:

Jesus is showing us in Matthew 7:14 that there is:

- A narrower gate than simply physical descent
- A narrower way than that mapped out by the Pharisees

Matthew 5:20

²⁰ "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Only those with the faith of Abraham (Rom 4:16) and the works of Abraham (Jn 8:39) would enter into the Kingdom. The flesh of Abraham has nothing to do with it!

How many today feel they will be ushered in with a big group?

- With their parents?
- With their children?
- With their spouse?
- With their congregation?

Jesus is saying the gate is so narrow men must pass through single file. No "group rates" are available.

If anyone makes it into the kingdom of heaven it is because he as an individual obeyed the Father's will.

Ezekiel 18:20

²⁰ "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

THIRD: We must enter *NAKED*.

You cannot enter the narrow gate with baggage.

ILL: Have you ever tried to go through a "*turnstile*" with baggage? It's a mess!

We must unload ourselves of:

- all pride
- all ambition
- all greed
- all envy
- all hatred
- all lust
- of all of ourselves!

Matthew 13:44

⁴⁴ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

We must "*sell all*" that we have in order to enter the narrow gate.

To "*sell all*" means we give everything we own to the use of God and we keep back nothing for our own selfish pleasure.

FOURTH: We must enter with *DIFFICULTY*.

In Luke's parallel passage Jesus points out the difficulty of entering the gate:

Luke 13:23-24

²³ Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them,

²⁴ "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

This "*certain man*" asked if only a few are being saved. The implied answer is, "Yes." But Jesus goes on to answer the question that was not asked. If few be saved, the next logical question is: WHY?

Jesus answers by saying the entrance is so narrow that men must strive to enter it.

"strive" (ἀγωνίζω) – from which we get the English word "agonize"

Not many are willing to agonize to enter.

Acts 14:22

²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

Furthermore, Jesus taught, "***few there be that [even] find it.***" The gate is so narrow and small that many will not even see it. Those who do see it must agonize to enter in.

No one ever slipped and fell into the Kingdom. One of the greatest lies Satan has perpetrated upon men is to get them to think it's easy to become a disciple.

It's not easy! When one tries to enter the Kingdom he has all of hell working against him.

- Satan and his demons
- Sometimes friends & relatives oppose you
- Our own fleshly desires try to turn us away

How many among our own people have never truly known what it means to "*agonize*" and "*strive*" for entrance through the gate?

Song:

*"Shall I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fight to win the prize
And sail through bloody seas."*

THE NARROW WAY

After the gate comes the narrow way. In other words, there is an entire course of life which follows the initial obedience to the gospel.

How many of our own people believe that if they simply get baptized they now have a free ticket to heaven?

The way is as narrow as the gate. Each step of the way is as difficult as the very first step at the entrance.

WHY CHOOSE THE NARROW WAY?

In view of all this, how can people choose the narrow road when they look at what the broad way offers? How can men stay on the hard narrow path when they look over and see the wicked prospering?

Asaph wrestled with this problem in Ps 73. Asaph saw wicked man prosper; they were wealthier, and healthier than God's people. He thought to himself:

Psalms 73:13

¹³ Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, ...

Later he said:

Psalms 73:16-17

¹⁶ When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me;

¹⁷ **Until** I went into the sanctuary of God; ...

What caused Asaph to see things differently?

Psalms 73:17-18, 24

¹⁷ ... **Then** I understood their end.

¹⁸ Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.

²⁴ You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.

Jesus is likewise telling us not to look at the narrowness, or wideness of the gates and ways, but rather at the ultimate destiny!

CONCLUSION

At the end of Mt 7 the people on the mountain were astonished at what Jesus taught (7:28-29) and even today it is shocking.

Today preachers spend the majority of their time trying to persuade men that:

- *"It's not hard to be saved."*
- *"You don't have to give up much."*

Jesus spent His time trying to discourage men from hastily entering the gate. He wanted men to be fully aware of the tremendous sacrifices necessary to be a disciple in the Kingdom.

He told it like it was:

- One must hate his father, mother, son and daughter (Mt 10:38)
- Must seek first the kingdom (Mt 6:33)
- Must cut off hands and pluck out eyes that offend (Mt 5:29-30)
- Must deny self and take up a cross (Mk 10:21)

He warned of floods and storms; winds and rain; sweat and blood. But He always added:

Matthew 24:13

¹³ "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Today Jesus sets before us a choice which we must make. To reject the narrow way is to accept the way to destruction.