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Decision Time on the Mountain

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

Matthew 7:13-14

Matthew 7:13–14, *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. **14** For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

Throughout His sermon, Jesus presented the Kingdom of Heaven to the gathered crowd on the hillside in Galilee. From the opening statement, *“**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,**”* Jesus builds towards the climatic statement in chapter 7, verses 13 & 14. He repeats the statement, *“**theirs is the kingdom of heaven,**”* in vs. 10. In the intervening verses, He adds comfort, inheritance, satisfaction, mercy, seeing God, and sons of God. These are all descriptive by-products of admittance into the His Kingdom through the narrow gate.

In building to His conclusion, He has contrasted true religion (His Kingdom standard) and the false religion of the day (Man’s attempt to present a viable way to heaven). Here are the contrasts:

- True religion vs. False Religion.
- Divine righteousness vs. human righteousness.
- Christ vs. the Pharisees & Scribes.

At the end of the analysis of world religion, there are only two religions. One religion is the religion of human righteousness (man must attain a level of goodness, righteousness, peace, Zen, etc., to gain admittance to a peaceful afterlife). The second is based on divine righteousness. (Divine righteousness as defined in Scripture and presented here by Jesus). It also important to note what it is not...

- It is not Christianity vs. paganism, atheism, or some way paving the road to hell.
- It is not godliness & Christianity vs. irreligious people.
- It is not a contrast of one way to Heaven and one way to Hell (both roads are advertised as ways to Heaven).

Satan does not mark the road, *“This way to Hell, come on down!”* The Bible teaches repetitively that there are only two choices...and that they are absolute with no variance.

Joshua 24:15, *And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond 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.”*

Deuteronomy 30:15, *See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. Deut 30:19*, *“Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live”*

1 Kings 18:21, *And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word.*

Jeremiah 21:8, *“And to this people you shall say: ‘Thus says the Lord: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.*

John 6:66–68, *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,*

Jesus is Calling for a decision

Acts 4:12; John 14:6; John 10; 1 Tim 2

There are only two religions in the world. One is built upon human righteousness, and the other on divine righteousness.

There are two gates: the wide and the straight. There are two ways: the broad and the narrow. There are two destinations: life and destruction. There are two kinds of travelers: the few and the many.

I. There are Only Two Gates

A. A Narrow Gate

1. **You must enter** – the verb tense calls for a “Do it now!” decision. **Matthew 5:20**, *For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*
2. **You must enter this narrow gate**, it is the only gate that leads to life.
3. **You must enter alone**. It is a “constricted” gate. A confining gate. You cannot enter as a group (family)
4. **You must enter with difficulty.**
 - a) Going through the gate is easy. Passing through the gate on the basis of faith, easy.
 - b) Making the decision to enter the gate, hard.
 - (1) **Matthew 7:14**, *For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*
 - (2) **Luke 13:22–24**, *He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, 24 “*Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*”*
 - (a) There are many seeking, but when they hear the cost, they turn away.
 - (3) **Matthew 11:12**, *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.*
 - (4) **Luke 16:16**, *The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.*
 - (5) **John 16:33**, *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*
5. **You must enter with nothing.**
 - (1) **Matthew 19:16-26**
 - (2) **Matthew 18:3**, *“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*
6. **You must enter repentantly**

B. A Wide Gate (Eph 2:2; Psalm 1:6)

1. You can go through with the crowd, family, or a church.
2. You can enter with your sin.
3. You can bring any theology about God.
4. You can choose not to obey.

II. There Are Only Two Ways (Roads)

A. A Hard Way

1. It is narrow, even constricting. It is narrow due to ‘divine revelation.’
2. Revealed truth imposes limitations on what Christians may believe.
3. Yet, on the other side Jesus said my yoke is easy and my burden light.

B. An Easy Way – it is broad, spacious, and roomy.

1. Room for diversity of opinion
2. Broad enough to accommodate different morals.
3. Roomy and tolerant; no curbs, no boundaries of thought or conduct.

III. There are Only Two Destinations

A. Perishing – Hell –

1. **Deuteronomy 30:15**, *See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.*

B. Prospering – Heaven –

1. **Deut 30:19**, *“Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live”*

IV. There are Only Two Crowds

A. The Many

B. The Few

1. **Luke 12:32**. *“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

Luke 18:9–14, *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Ephesians 2:2, *In which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*

Psalms 1:1–6, *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.*

Matthew 19:16–26, *And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” 17 And he said to him, “*Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.*” 18 He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “*You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, 19 Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” 20 The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” 21 Jesus said to him, “*If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.*” 22 When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus said to his disciples, “*Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.*” 25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” 26 But Jesus looked at them and said, “*With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*”*