

IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

Wide, Narrow and Straight Gates Bible Study

The in-depth summary of each bible study differs from the small group bible study laid out before the leader and the students. The in-depth summary is designed to help the leader with comprehensive information, much more than what is in the text notes found at the bottom of every bible page. The small group studies are intended to be interactive, provide a learning atmosphere for students, and have open discussions allowing for interpretations of what the gospels' witnessed. An exhaustive search was completed on each verse to help the Leader answer questions that may come up during the study.

Our research on the "Narrow and Wide Gates" found that most of these studies focus on Matthew 7:13-14. A few studies use Luke's version, Luke 13:23-24. Probably because in Matthew's version, Jesus describes both gates and both types of people who try to enter them. This is probably because, in Luke's version, Jesus only describes one, the narrow gate. However, in Luke, Jesus provides a more detailed illustration of the Master of the house using an analogy of a door, Luke 13:25-28. These studies adequately describe the basics and the importance of choosing which gate.

After a lengthy evaluation, we believe comparing Matthew's and Luke's versions provides a better perspective. The "Narrow and Wide Gates" documented by Matthew and Luke were similar parables during different sermons at different times. We have decided to expand the study to be more comprehensive and continue Jesus' comments in Luke 13:25-30 about the "Master of the house shutting the door." Jesus' language changes the analogy from the "gate" to the "door"; however, both illustrate the repercussions if the gate or door is shut. We also felt it is necessary to include Jesus' parable of the door of the sheep as He compares it to himself as the door to eternal life. We will also add a few passages from John 10:7-9 and John 14:6 to further the perspective and the importance of Jesus' parables of the door. While a bit longer, this study will provide a complete perspective of the Narrow and Wide Gates.

The Narrow and Broad Gates (Read the verses outlined in blue: First read Luke 13:22-24, then Matthew 7:13-14).

Luke 13:22: Luke describes Jesus as on a journey toward Jerusalem. The journey is implied and deliberately planned. He traveled through cities and villages most

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Created: 11/27/2022

IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

Wide, Narrow and Straight Gates Bible Study

likely coming from Galilee. Luke states that Jesus was teaching in cities and villages, were diligent about His work and continued teaching during the journey to Jerusalem. Jesus did not conceal who He was when he was traveling. He spoke openly about his purpose.

Luke 13:23: Someone asks Jesus, “are there only a few people who will be saved?” **What is His response?** It is unclear who asked this question, but it was probably not one of the disciples but one of the Jews. The man who asked the questions wished to know the opinion of Jesus. It was the curiosity of many Jews as they maintained the belief that only a small number of people would enter heaven. It was essential for the man who asked to secure his salvation rather than indulge in vain speculation. Jesus answers the question by telling them to strive to enter through the narrow gate. He stated that many will seek to enter and will be unable to.

“Strive to enter.” What does it mean when Jesus states in Luke 13:24 to “Strive to enter?” Some of the new versions water down the terminology. King James refers to the word “Strive,” the NIV uses “Make every effort,” and NLT uses “Work Hard.” Strive is more impactful, which means exerting oneself vigorously. Albert Barnes, in 1832 states, “Jesus means that we should be diligent, active, earnest; that we should make it our first and chief business to overcome our sinful propensities and to endeavor to enter into heaven.”

Jesus’ words are directed toward Israel. The term “you” is frequently found in verses Luke 24-28 (9 times). The context is evident that “you” is Israel.

The Strait Gate: Why is the gate narrow? Most bible notes state that the narrow gate leads to the kingdom of heaven, while the wide gate leads to destruction or separation from God, in Hell. Many versions use the phrase “narrow.” The King James version uses “strait.” Both “strait” and “narrow” are spelled the same in the Greek translation as “pent up, narrow, close or not entered.” Strait is different than “Straight.” Straight means not crooked. In Luke’s version, Jesus states that the gate is narrow, and many seek to enter it and will not be able to. Reading Luke by itself, Jesus does not yet know why they cannot enter. Jesus made the gate is narrow for a reason. We will discuss John’s version later; for now, read John 10:9 and John 14:6 to help understand why the gate narrow and

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Created: 11/27/2022

IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

Wide, Narrow and Straight Gates Bible Study

the importance of the gate. John 10:9, in context, refers to sheep, or the people of God, seeking and finding their way from the pasture to a gate. The gate is referred to as Jesus. Jesus stated that He is the door, which means singular. The gate is so narrow that there is only Jesus at the door. He and he alone will decide who will enter through the gate.

Now let's compare this with Matthew's version. **Finish the scripture Matthew 7:14: "Difficult is the way (or pathway) which leads to life, and _____."** Then explain why only a few find it. "There are few who find it." Luke's version, Jesus states many will seek, Matthew's version, Jesus states few will find it. The narrow way must first be sought after, searched, and then found. The way is narrow and not easily found or accepted it. Some may seek it, but they do not agonize over it. Consequently, their gate will be shut. Only a few find it because the narrow way is difficult.

Why is the narrow way difficult? The narrow gate, or the narrow path, is less traveled. Following Jesus Christ is not easy. His bar is high without sin. We must fight against our sinful nature. Jesus calls us to help others to find the way. We will also experience hatred and persecution. Read Matthew 5:10. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Societies will not like being told there is a higher standard to live up to. Non-believers do not want to be told they are sinners and need to end their sinful ways.

What does it mean "the narrow path leads to life?" This is the path to eternal life. Read John 17:3, Jesus states, "And, this is eternal life – that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Think of having eternal life with Jesus and having eternal joy in heaven.

What is the wide gate? The wide gate is all-inclusive—everything other than the door through Jesus. (John 14:6) This includes all the world's various views, religions, and lifestyles. The gate and pathway must be wide and broad to accommodate such an immense multitude. Also, Jesus states in Matthew 7:13 that the wide gate and the broad way lead to destruction. There is no check at the door, for everyone will be welcome.

IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

Wide, Narrow and Straight Gates Bible Study

What does it mean that the way is broad? The way is broad means the pathway is spacious and easy to follow. In some churches, religions, and media, they say things like:

All roads lead to God

Everyone that does well goes to Heaven

Hell is just a fictitious myth made up to scare people

Whatever your belief or spiritual truth, many paths lead to Heaven.

This could not be farther from the truth. Specifically, reread John 14:6.

What does it mean that many enter through it? Christ makes it clear, entering the narrow gate, few will find it. Conversely, He also states that many will seek the wide gate and go in by it. People sometimes feel safer in crowds. They conclude that if everyone is doing the same thing, they must be on the safer path. It is a very enticing and secure feeling to belong. Going against the group can feel like you are isolated or alone.

What happens to those who enter the wide gate and are led to destruction?

There are two ways to spend eternity. Either in Heaven in blessing with God or Hell in damnation. Suffering eternal torment separated from God is more excruciating than we can imagine. We may experience short-term pain from an injury or loneliness from a loved one passing. However, to endure eternity without God and a nightmare of misery would be indescribable, unbearable at best.

I am the door. (Read the verses outlined in purple: John 10:7-9) **What or who is the 'gate' being referred to?** Jesus is the gate or the door, depending on your translated version. Jesus answers this question in John 10:7 "I am the door of the sheep." Moreover, in John 10:9, Jesus states, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." Jesus refers to those who enter the door using sheep as a metaphor for people. He most importantly mentions that once entered; you will be saved. This is the lesson to be learned, and Jesus explains explicitly this in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Jesus makes it

IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

Wide, Narrow and Straight Gates Bible Study

clear that He is the ONLY gate to enter heaven. It cannot be any narrower than Jesus being the only “One” to make this decision. Without His approval and blessing, there is no other way to enter heaven.

Who are the sheep? The sheep represent the church of God. In context, John 7-9, “I am the door. If anyone who enters by Me, he will be saved.’ Jesus is the one who decides who enters through the door and who does not.

Luke 13:25-27: (Read the verses outlined in black: Luke 13:25-27) Luke does not plainly say anything about the wide gate. Jesus provides an analogy if one seeks the narrow gate, and the door is shut.

Who is the master of the house? Jesus is the master of the house.

What is the master’s reply when someone knocks at the door? Jesus states He does not know you nor where you come from. If Jesus does not have a relationship with that person, and He is not familiar with who they are, then Jesus will be blunt and honest and state I did not know you. It does not state that their path will be the wide or broad gate, but the narrow gate will certainly be shut.

Why does Jesus say in Luke 13:25-27 “I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.” Jesus illustrates how the narrow gate will be shut. All of this is just proof of friendship, not a relationship. The people who say, “We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets,” are those who attended churches and talked about the Scriptures and the Lord, but they never accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. None of these things will avail themselves on the day of judgment. It will be only true love for God, a real change of heart, and a life of piety that can save the soul from death.

Read Matthew 7:7-8. **How is this different from someone knocking on Jesus’ door and He opening it, compared to knocking on the master’s door and Jesus’ response, I do not know you?”** In Matthew 7:7, this is Jesus’ response when you seek to be with Him and have a relationship with Him. He wants us to have a relationship with Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit. All we have to do is ask to have one and start on the journey. Whereas in Luke 13:25, now that time has passed. They cannot live life deliberately, not choosing to have a relationship with Christ, and then knock and ask to be let in at time of judgment.

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IN-DEPTH SUMMARY

Wide, Narrow and Straight Gates Bible Study

The weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Read the verses outlined in red: Matthew 8:11-12 and Luke 13:18-29) **What does this mean, “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the profits in the kingdom of God and yourselves are thrust out?”** The image expresses the fact the lost wicked will be shut out from the light of heaven, peace, joy and hope. They will be weeping in hopeless grief gnashing their teeth, displeasure against God, and murmuring against justice. Masters in the day had a habit of constructing such prisons for slaves where the prisoner was without a light, company, or comfort, spending his days and nights weeping and vainly gnashing his teeth in resentment. It is often tied with agony and desolation.

First and Last. (Read the verses outlined in grey: Mark 10:31 and Luke 13:30) What does it mean in Luke 13:29-30 that last will be first and first will be last? This phrase comes up four times in Matthew 19:30; Matthew 20:16; Mark 10:31, and Luke 13:30. Every time this phrase comes up, it refers to the fact that one's position in this life does not give a person an advantage in gaining eternal life in heaven. It does not make a difference who we are in this world or what we have done. Eternal life is for those who believe in Him. The gospel was given by Jesus to the Jews first. They were God's first plan. But since they were rejecting Him, they will be last.

I Am The Way (Read the verses outlined in green: John 14:6) This verse John provides is part of another study. However, as a conclusion of passing through the narrow gate, we felt it was necessary to include it at this time as the glorified result of entering the Kingdom of God. Jesus cannot make this any clearer. No one can come before the Lord God except through the blessing of Jesus Christ. When the day of judgment comes, if Jesus finds favor with you, He will wipe away all your sins, present you before the Lord, and witness to Him that your is soul pure and may enter into the Kingdom of God.