



MATTHEW 7:13-29

MESSIAH ON A MISSION (PART 13)

Living Out the Will of God

The first section is; the way into the Kingdom is narrow but those few who find shall find life (7:13-14). Second, "beware of false prophets" and use discernment to know them by what they produce (7:15-20). Thirdly, The uselessness of outward profession of Christianity is revealed (7:21-23). Lastly, the contrast of a life built on rock or sand, word of God or opinion of man, is shown (7:24-29). If one lives out these warnings and applies the teachings of Jesus that person would be "Living out the will of God."





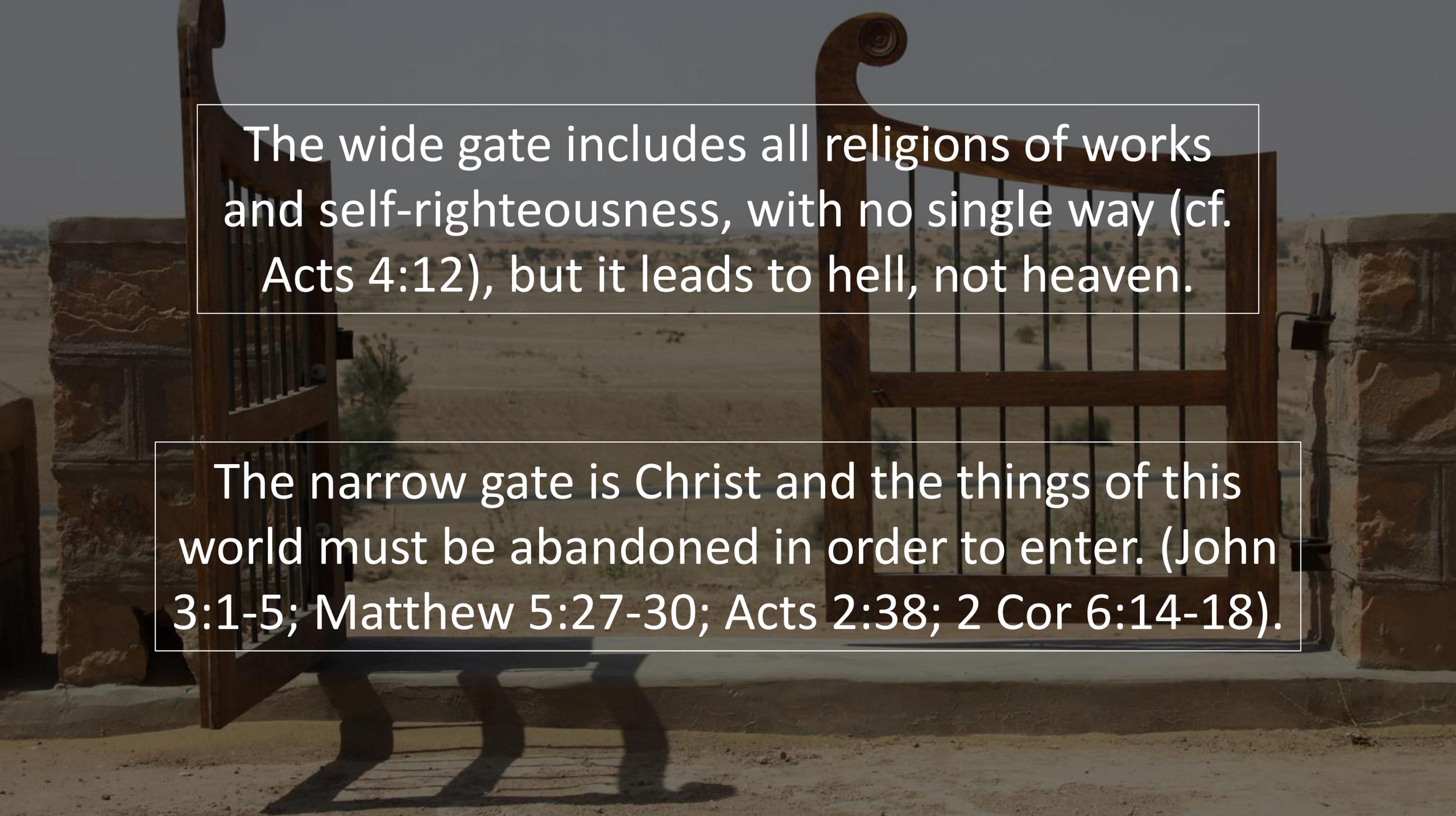
(7:13-14) Narrow Gate:

7:13–14 The image of two paths was common in Judaism. Sometimes the analogy was of separate roads leading in opposite directions — to paradise or to hell. At other times a narrow path of life’s hardships was pictured as ultimately leading to a broad path of eternal blessing. (Archeological Study Bible)

The wide gate is the Devil, and Hell is entered into through the broad way. The gate of narrowness is Jesus, through which one enters into heaven.

*"This is the gate of the LORD; The righteous will enter through it."
(Psalms 118:20)*



A wide, open wooden gate with a curved top, set in a desert landscape. The gate is flanked by stone pillars. The background shows a vast, arid plain under a clear sky. The gate is open, leading to a path that disappears into the distance.

The wide gate includes all religions of works and self-righteousness, with no single way (cf. Acts 4:12), but it leads to hell, not heaven.

The narrow gate is Christ and the things of this world must be abandoned in order to enter. (John 3:1-5; Matthew 5:27-30; Acts 2:38; 2 Cor 6:14-18).

(7:15-20)
False
Prophets

Jesus says that there are two ways, one easy, one hard; two gates, one broad, one narrow; taken by two crowds, one large, one small; ending in two destinations, death and life. He also says there are two prophets, the false and the true.

False Prophets

The majority may be regarded rather as men accustomed to the outward signs of the prophetic office, the hairy mantle (Zec 13:4, cf. 1 K 19:19), the methods of prophetic instruction (Jer 28:10), and the use of the prophetic formula, ' Thus saith Jehovah ' (Jer. 23:25-31, Ezk 13:6), but who had never come under the influence of, or had failed to remain in personal contact with, the revealing Spirit ' who spake by the prophets.' Hence the message they gave was merely one that was agreeable to the common thought of the people, whether it concerned the internal condition and life of the nation or its relation to surrounding States.



(Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels; Vol. 1; p. 575-- More on this in Footnote 1)

(7:21- 23) “Lord, Lord”

“Double Names, as when Jesus said, “Martha, Martha” makes a Hebrew idiom of some force. This is punctuated “Martha, Martha!” to indicate a stern attention-getter. Someone saying, “Lord, Lord!” would certainly not be stern but would be making a strong plea. This idiom is still used in modern conversational Hebrew. Double names imply desperation. (The Expositors Dictionary of Texts)

(7:24-29) Two Builders and Two Foundations

The Sea of Galilee served as a natural setting for this parable. The sand ringing the lake was rock hard during the hot summer. But a wise builder would dig down, as far as ten feet (three m) below the surface sand to the bedrock, knowing that this was the only way to erect a foundation able to withstand the winter rains, which were notoriously torrential and capable of causing disastrous flooding.

(Archeological Study Bible)

FOOTNOTES: CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES

FOOTNOTE 1: *False Prophets*

The majority may be regarded rather as men accustomed to the outward signs of the prophetic office, the hairy mantle (Zec 13:4, cf. 1 K 19:19), the methods of prophetic instruction (Jer 28:10), and the use of the prophetic formula, ' Thus saith Jehovah ' (Jer. 23:25-31, Ezk 13:6), but who had never come under the influence of, or had failed to remain in personal contact with, the revealing Spirit ' who spake by the prophets.' Hence the message they gave was merely one that was agreeable to the common thought of the people, whether it concerned the internal condition and life of the nation or its relation to surrounding States.

Hence their truth or falseness, their faithful use, or their abuse of the spiritual gift, was an important factor for the infant Church. Hence our Lord warns against them as ' wolves in sheep's clothing' (Mt 7:15), and St. John at the end of the Apostolic age repeats the warning (I Jn 4:1). In the former case the reference is apparently to their unethical teaching; in the latter to their denial or misinterpretation of the fact of the Incarnation. Without using the name, our Lord warns also against such men, as falsely predicting or announcing the Parousia (Mt 24:5-7). In 2 Peter 2:1 stress is laid upon false teaching of an antinomian character, the authors of which are called ' false teachers,' but find their analogy in the 'false prophets ' of the OT.



FOOTNOTE 2:

Prophets False and True

Prophets False and True—The interpreter should link these verses with the whole passage through vs. 23. The Exegesis on prophets and Lord, Lord is particularly important. There is little doubt that the prophets here described were not Pharisees or even spurious imitators of John the Baptist, but false leaders in the early Christian church. Perhaps we can gather cheer from that fact to the extent of not despairing so easily of our present Christianity. But there is more warning : our Christianity also is easily infected with falsity. The whole passage is momentous for Christian leadership. The marks of a false prophet are here given, and they convict us. False prophets are outwardly true: their manner—sheep's clothing—appears to certify them as members of the flock of Christ. But they are ravaging in their influence: they leave the church stripped of funds, chaotic in emotion rather than serene, and drained of homespun virtue and staying power. They are correct in theology and ardently punctilious in their phraseology: Lord, Lord. They even win a measure of success: they drive out demons and work cures, and crowds gather to their message. Some elements in the early church called them "Christ-merchants." The reader should notice the truth of this description when applied to a mercenary class of evangelists. The falsity is the more tragic because the church cannot live without true evangelists: the gospel is the Evangel.



FOOTNOTE 2:

Prophets

False and True

(pt. 2)

The marks of a true prophet are also given. The Didache (Ch. II) supplements, as with a bill of particulars, Christ's word, Ye shall know them by their fruits. It says that if a prophet imposes on the hospitality of a lowly Christian by staying in his house more than two days, or if he asks on leaving for more food than is necessary for one day's journey, or if in a trance he sees a table lavishly spread and indicates that such a table is obviously required for him by God's revelation, the prophet is no prophet but a fake. Fruits means more than outward act: it means inner motive relentlessly showing itself in the course of time by word and conduct. Fruit grows slowly, but it unimpugnably proclaims the tree. Thus the test is one of inner and outer Christlikeness proved by time --the eyes of Christ being the judgment. Illustrations are not needed: let the interpreter cite them, meanwhile looking rigorously to his own life. The sovereignty of Christ is here portrayed. History comes to its climactic in him: "in that day"! He rules, dividing the sheep from the goats, goats that in the dimness of our sight look like sheep. He pronounces judgment on the false prophet. "I never knew you," as if to say, "I never gave your falsity any ordination in the spirit." He welcomes the true prophet who outwardly may have won no spectacular success: "Come, ye blessed of my Father" (25: 34). There is a difference between a "Christ-merchant" and a Christian.

(The Interpreter's Bible; New Testament Articles; Matthew 331, 332)