

# PULPIT SERMONS

## DEFENDERS OF THE WORD

### "The Strait Gate!!!"

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TEXT: "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 thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."—Matthew 7:13, 14.

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 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: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 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. And they shall come from the east, and the west, and from the north, and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."—Luke 13:24-30.

These are not the words of man, but the words of our Lord, Jesus Christ, as He spoke, and is recorded in the Gospels. As straight means "a narrow pass or passage", I believe we could reverse this Scripture (verse 14) to read, "narrow is the gate, and straight is the WAY", giving a complete understanding of what Jesus meant, that our complete life on this earth, as true children of God, serves as our gate and way to heaven, which is a very straight (STRICT) and narrow way. But, there is a great falling away now in the Church world and many have left this strait and narrow way. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."—I Corinthians 3:18.

Many good ministers that started out on fire for God, preached and lived the strait and narrow way, but became wise in the things of this world, and therefore have left off preaching Holiness and are in a backslidden condition. They need to become FOOLS that they might find their way back to the strait and narrow way.

All denominations that started out on fire for God had a narrow walk with Him until they be-

came broadminded, as the world calls it, and started seeking for and after things other than God's Spirit and Righteousness. Today, that is all they have in their godless organizations—OTHER THINGS! When we started our Association, we were more prone to compromise to see our numbers grow, but as we grow in the Lord we are more careful of who we have in our group. We pray continually for God to help us keep our Association clean of all worldliness and uncleanness, and this He is doing. Praise His wonderful Name.

I feel sure that Christians, who have been so for very long, will agree with me that their Christian life has become more narrow along the way with God. I know that since I have become a child of God that I have had to stop doing things that at first I could see no harm in. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—Hebrews 12:1.

It appears that many people have the attitude that if they can enter this gate of salvation by saving grace that they have passed the test, come through the narrow gate, entering into a large, wide area where they can travel any way they desire, but still on their way to heaven. I will have to cry out with the Apostle Paul, as he said in Romans 10:1-3, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 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."

Paul was dealing with brethren who had a zeal for God, but not a knowledge of God's righteousness, a people who had felt and experienced a real witness of God's saving power in their lives at some time, but had failed to realize, in their entering into saving grace, that we are still on probation as long as we are in this mortal flesh.

Getting saved is just entering into this NARROW GATE from earth to glory. And as we travel this way, which is not a way of worldly liberties, we find that the closer we walk with God, the more narrow the way becomes, leading us into sanctification, making the way still more narrow.

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And as God brings us through the trials of this life, and we grow in grace to be strong soldiers for Him, the way becomes more narrow. All of this life we are on probation, passing through the narrow gate, with God drawing us closer and closer to Him, separating us more and more from the things of this world, and preparing us for a glorious entrance into that Celestial City.

"But the path of the just is as shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—Proverbs 4:18. This Grace Age has more Spiritual Light than this world has ever experienced before. And this Spiritual Light has grown brighter as this age has progressed. We, as God's people, are held responsible for every ray of this light that we are privileged to have, causing us a more narrow walk with God than Christians who lived in ages past, as the measure of light is the measure of responsibility. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."—I John 1:6, 7.

One of the measures of responsibility is to separate ourselves from worldly habits, lusts and activities. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."—2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

"... Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"—I Kings 18:17. In this life no one seems to think that he could possibly be wrong. It is always the other party. Old Ahab had committed just about every sin in the book, but still it wasn't him who was troubling Israel. It had to be someone else. Of course, it couldn't be HIM! So, he accused Elijah. Why, sure, it was old Elijah who was keeping things stirred up! Brother, God's people don't stir, mix or mingle. They separate! We need more separators today and not so many mixers.

Ahab possibly had once a heart for God. But his heart started longing for more worldly things. I think perhaps the thing that really took him the farthest from God was his wife, Jezebel. She liked the world and all that went with it, with all of her paint, and new suits, and living like a queen. She got Ahab to set up idolatry, make it the religion of the country. Ahab was the tool of his wife. He was a weak man; he didn't have any convictions. He didn't have enough backbone to stand up for the RIGHT. No wonder Israel went down; no wonder Israel was troubled. This wicked leader was the cause of his country's failure. He didn't realize that in his attempt to bring harmony by condoning SIN, he was in turn bringing about the destruction of his country. Let me say this, a country, a union, an organization, or a Church is no better than its leaders.

But let us go on and see just what kind of answer Ahab got to his question. "And he answered,

I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim."—1 Kings 18:18. There wasn't any condemnation on Elijah's soul. And Ahab answered the old prophet not a word.

Right is right, and wrong is wrong! In the world today, right is wrong, and wrong is right. But God help US to stay with what is RIGHT. If those of my household, or elsewhere, can get to Heaven doing things that other Christians can not understand, that doesn't mean that I can get to Heaven dabbling with those things, when God shines His searchlight of Heaven on my heart. My way will have to become more NARROW as the LIGHT of GOD shines in upon my SOUL.

Brethren, the devil is subtle. He will let you live for God for many years with a trap set down the road for you, to trip when your way with God becomes more BROAD instead of more NARROW.

Let us take Brother Jude's advice, in verse 3; "... ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." — a LIVING FAITH beginning in our hearts when we receive SAVING GRACE at the altar of repentance, and being made perfect to God by His sanctifying power, keeping us to a more narrow walk with God until He calls each of His TRUE SAINTS home to Heaven.

In closing, let us cry again with Brother Paul, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED." Amen.

