



TEEN TREE OF LIFE THE NARROW OR THE WIDE GATE

Part 3

March 31, 2019

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1JOHN 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

So far in our study on "The Narrow Or The Wide Gate," we've learned that going through either one, amounts to choosing between God or Satan. We've learned that the wide gate includes a bunch of different entry points and each entry point has groups of people with signs, each saying different things. But each group's goals are basically the same: to get more people through its entry way within the wide gate. We also learned that these splintered groups are loud-mouthed and argumentative toward each other and that their greatest hatred is toward The Man at the narrow gate – Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So let's go back to you imagining you're standing between the narrow and the wide gates. You can see beyond each one. And you can see down the paths that lead away from each gate.

The wide gate leads out to a wide path that is smooth, with gentle, sloping hills. The wide path is filled with huge crowds of people who are traveling in smaller groups. Each of these smaller groups had developed near its own, different entry point along the wide path. These entry points were where these smaller groups of people had entered the wide gate. Some of these people are laughing and joking while others are serious and even crying. Some are singing and strolling along while others seem very determined to get somewhere.

The narrow gate leads out to a very different path. Its path (in comparison to the wide path) has very few people on it. The narrow path appears to be rocky and difficult to navigate, in some places. The narrow path has very steep hills and slopes.

The people on the wide path are pointing to the people on the narrow path. Some of them are laughing at those on the narrow path. Some are mocking them. Some are even calling out to the people on the narrow path to cross over to the wide path!! You may even notice a small trail here and there, and realize, sadly, that some of them have done just that!

It's extremely important to note here that believers can NEVER lose their Salvation. Mankind is born spiritually dead and consequently, separate from God. Salvation is God's Work in saving us from the power and effects of being born in sin and separate from Him. Salvation was accomplished by Jesus Christ's Finished Work on The Cross. Any member of the human race can receive God's Grace Gift of Salvation by simply believing in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior. **ACTS 16** records Paul's second missionary journey with Silas and Timothy; in **ACTS 16:31**, Paul and Silas say: "**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...**" Salvation is that simple and once you are saved, no matter what you do, you can NEVER lose your Salvation.

Now look at **JOH 10:25-30 (The Message Bible):** *Jesus answered, "I told you, but you don't believe. Everything I have done has been authorized by my Father, actions that speak louder than words. You don't believe because you're not my sheep. My sheep recognize my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them real and eternal life. They are protected from the Destroyer [Satan] for good. No one can steal them from out of my hand. The Father who put them under my care is so much greater than the Destroyer and Thief [Satan]. No one could ever get them away from him. I and the Father are one heart and mind."* Another bible verse which teaches us that you cannot lose your Salvation is **JOH 1:12-13 (New International Version):** *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.* Any Christian who thinks he or she can lose his or her Salvation is wrong. The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible and He cannot lie. God The Father cannot lie. Christ, the Messiah, cannot lie. Lying is against their Nature! **ACTS 16:31** is not a lie!!!! Once you believe, you are saved and that is your ticket into Heaven.

Back to the paths of the Narrow and Wide gates! At this point, you can't make out the end destination of either path. Then someone hands you a telescope so you can see better and do you know what you see? The narrow path turns upward into the clouds. And in those clouds, you see angels singing to Someone Who is shining so brightly that you almost can't look at Him. This is Heaven.

Then you turn your telescope to the end of the wide path. You notice that it slopes downward and then suddenly drops off into what appears to be a very dark pit, from which smoke is rising. This is hell.

In last week's Tree, we looked at **The Living Bible** translation of **MATT 7:13-14**. These are the main verses of our study. Our Lord and Savior is teaching the crowds of people who have gathered on the Mount of Beatitudes: "**Heaven can be entered only through the narrow gate! The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide enough for all the multitudes who choose its easy way. But the Gateway to Life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.**" The choices He's describing are the gate to

Heaven or the gate to hell. The choice does refer to our choice to personally believe in Jesus Christ to be saved; but it's also a choice we make almost every minute of every day **after we're saved.**

Every choice we make as believers is Biblically right or Biblically wrong. When we are Biblically wrong, we are sinning. But God, in His Faithfulness to us, has graciously provided **1JOH1:9: *If we confess* [name] *our sins* [directly to God], *He* [God] *is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*** This is called rebound and is the first Problem-Solving Device (tool). And when we rebound or name our sins to God, we put ourselves back in fellowship with Him. But there is always going to be another opportunity to make the choice again, because we are born sinners. Our old sin-nature never goes away. Even Paul the apostle – the greatest pastor/teacher in the Church-Age (the time in which we are living) wrote: ***Here's a word you can take to heart and depend on: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I'm proof—Public Sinner Number One... (1TIM 1:15 The Message Bible)***

The question then becomes, what will we choose? Will we be Biblically right or Biblically wrong? Will we choose God or Satan?

The choice seems easier to make when we remember the end destination. The problem is that we, as Christians, often **FORGET** that Heaven is where we're headed. We tend not to look at the final destination. We get sidetracked by Satan's cosmic system and the people on the wide path!! Paul also wrote: ***Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (COL 3:2)*** This should be your goal as a Christian. We are constantly being distracted by Satan – on what we're seeing here and now in our daily lives on earth. We're not looking at where the narrow path leads. We mistakenly keep comparing The Call of The Man with The Scar – with those fun-loving, beautiful, intelligent, people at the wide gate. But no matter how attractive the people at the wide gate are and no matter what they promise, the reality is that their final destination is hell.

{to be continued}