



TEEN TREE OF LIFE THE NARROW OR THE WIDE GATE

Part 7

April 28, 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."*

We learned last week that as Christians in the Church-Age, we are commanded to study God's Word under a pastor-teacher. **He (Jesus Christ) handed out gifts above and below, filled heaven with his gifts, filled earth with his gifts. He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ. (EPH 4:11)**

The Bible doctrine your pastor-teacher is presenting to you is the most important information you will ever learn. Throughout your life, your choice of pastor-teacher is the most important choice you will ever make. Why? Because without a pastor-teacher, you will NEVER know God The Father, God The Son, or God The Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches us that God magnifies His Word above His Name: **"I will worship toward Your holy temple and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for you have magnified Your word above all Your name."** (PSA 138:2 New King James Version) So, God is telling us that the **VALUE** of His Word is **SUPERIOR** than **EVERYTHING** because **NOTHING** is **GREATER** or more **POWERFUL** or more **INCREDIBLE** or more **PERFECT** than God! The Bible – The Word of God – reveals the Person "below" or behind His Name. So, it stands to reason that you can't get to know God or His Son or our Mentor The Holy Spirit without a pastor-teacher. And this makes that man the most important person in your life.

As we continue our seventh week studying "The Narrow or The Wide Gate," remember that those gates present a choice between God and Satan. They present a choice between Good and evil. Evil is Satan's policy as the ruler of this world. Evil is Satan's method of operation, which has been in use, from the time of his fall throughout the angelic revolution, to when he became the ruler of the world. Evil is Satan's system by which he rules the world, in which we live today.

Since the beginning of humanity in the Garden of Eden, Satan has implemented his plan of deception, lies, and twisting God's Word to steal, kill and destroy our relationship with God The Father, God The Son, and God The Holy Spirit. Satan's plan in the Garden eventually spread to all of the different groups of people over the entire earth, often in slightly different versions, variations and under different names. Look at **ISA 59:19 (King James Version): *When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.*** The word "**enemy**" refers to Satan who is the relentless, cold-hearted adversary of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and His people. Jesus Christ and His Gospel are the "**standard**" lifted up "**against him.**" At every major point in history, when Satan came in to work his evil, God lifted "**up a standard against him!!!**"

Since the rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948, Satan has stepped up the intensity and frequency of his plan. His plan exploded in intensity in the late 1990's and continues to intensify today in the Church-Age. We are witnessing humanity destroying itself by war, deadly disease, famine, and other social, economic, and environmental crises. There were 20,000 members of the Dami sect in Korea who believed Christ would return in 1992. **God's Word teaches us NO ONE knows when He will return!**

In 1993, national news brought us David Koresh and the Branch Davidians. In 1997, we learned about thirty-nine members of the UFO Heaven's Gate cult who committed suicide in southern California. Add to this, all the people, wandering around the path of the Wide Gate (especially today), who claim to possess special enlightenment or knowledge. This knowledge is human viewpoint – Satan's viewpoint. And look at the meteoric rise of radical-terrorist Islam.

Reread the above two paragraphs and you cannot doubt that Satan's "teachings" just keep increasing. As Christians who make studying under a pastor-teacher the TOP priority in their lives, we should not be afraid of what these paragraphs says. Instead, we should rejoice at Who Jesus Christ is and What He has done for us!

Look at what Paul, the apostle, wrote in **2THS 2:1-12 (The Message Bible): *Now, friends, read these next words carefully. Slow down and don't go jumping to conclusions regarding the day when our Master, Jesus Christ, will come back and we assemble to welcome him. Don't let anyone shake you up or get you excited over some breathless report or rumored letter from me that the day of the Master's arrival has come and gone. Don't fall for any line like that. Before that day comes, a couple of things have to happen. First, the Apostasy. Second, the debut of the Anarchist, a real dog of Satan. He'll defy and then take over every so-called god or altar. Having cleared away the opposition, he'll then set himself up in God's Temple as "God Almighty." Don't you remember me going over all this in detail when I was with you?***

Are your memories that short? You'll also remember that I told you the Anarchist is being held back until just the right time. That doesn't mean that the spirit of anarchy is not now at work. It is, secretly and underground. But the time will come when the Anarchist will no longer be held back, but will be let loose. But don't worry. The Master Jesus will be right on his heels and blow him away. The Master appears and—puff!—the Anarchist is out of there. The Anarchist's coming is all Satan's work. All his power and signs and miracles are fake, evil sleight of hand that plays to the gallery of those who hate the truth that could save them. And since they're so obsessed with evil, God rubs their noses in it—gives them what they want. Since they refuse to trust truth, they're banished to their chosen world of lies and illusions. Paul is referring to the people who choose the Wide Gate when he says: **"those who hate the truth that could save them. And since they're so obsessed with evil, God rubs their noses in it—gives them what they want. Since they refuse to trust truth, they're banished to their chosen world of lies and illusions."**

Satan is a false teacher and sadly, the world in which we live is full of them. The Wide Gate is crammed with people teaching false religions, or who are heading cults, and all of them are teaching Satan's "word." The danger that we face is real and it's substantial! On **July 11, 2010**, Pastor Scott L. Harris of Grace Bible Church in New York wrote: **"The current deplorable state of our nation, both morally and even economically, is directly tied to the abandonment of Biblical Christianity..."** According to www.wikipedia.org, Barack Obama was President of the United States from 2009 through 2017.

Paul gave an important warning in **GAL 6:7-8 (The Message Bible): Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life.** Inspired by The Holy Spirit, Paul wrote that warning to us! And it's a warning to false teachers and their churches, too.

Now we're going to learn about Jacob and Esau who were twin brothers born to Isaac and Rebekah. The Bible teaches us that they struggled together in Rebekah's womb, an indication of their troubled relationship. Esau was born first so he became the legal heir to the family birthright. In addition to many other things, he became heir to the Covenant between God and Abraham. This birthright was a link in the line of descent through which the Promised Messiah – Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – was to come. Look at **NUM 24:2: And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping [living] tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. He took up his discourse...** Further on Balaam continues to speak, while inspired by The Holy Spirit: **"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the [corners] forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, While Israel performs valiantly. One from Jacob shall have dominion, And will destroy the remnant from the city."** (NUM 24:17-19) The "star" is Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Esau was a great hunter and his father's favorite. Jacob was a plain man as we learn in **GEN 25:27: *When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents.*** Jacob was his mother's favorite. The Hebrew word for plain is the same word translated in other Scripture as perfect, upright, and pure. So the word plain refers to Jacob's character as a man of God.

GEN 25:29-34 (The Message Bible) tells us more about Jacob and Esau: ***One day Jacob was cooking a stew. Esau came in from the field, starved. Esau said to Jacob, "Give me some of that red stew—I'm starved!" That's how he came to be called Edom (Red). Jacob said, "Make me a trade: my stew for your rights as the firstborn." Esau said, "I'm starving! What good is a birthright if I'm dead?" Jacob said, "First, swear to me." And he did it. On oath Esau traded away his rights as the firstborn. Jacob gave him bread and the stew of lentils. He ate and drank, got up and left. That's how Esau shrugged off his rights as the firstborn.*** Essentially, Esau had no interest in spiritual things so he agreed to give Jacob ***"his rights as the firstborn."*** Be real!! Do you think Esau was at the point of death by missing one meal???! What he did do, though, is reveal how worthless he considered his birthright.

{to be continued}