



13 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: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matt 7:13-14) (see also Luke 13:24-25)

There are a variety of gates in our world, some of them imaginary but also just as real as any steel reinforced gate of concrete. For example, in Instrument Flight, there is an imaginary point in space labelled by Air Traffic Control as the Approach Gate. It is located on the final approach course one mile from the Approach Fix. That means the landing aircraft is aligned for landing with the runway and assured of landing when cleared. Though it is an imaginary point in space, it is nonetheless as real, and more critical, than the gate to any military post or family garden. The STRAIT GATE to which our Lord makes reference is also an arbitrary point in space that aligns the Christian pilgrim for his entry into the Gates of Splendor when the fever of life is over. We do not go indirectly to that Gate, but are maneuvered to enter straightly by the Word of God. (Much as ATC, or airborne instrument readings, align an aircraft for the final approach and clearance to land.) By the way, we are all going to land either on that narrow and straight Runway of Heaven, or on the volcanic rocks and crooked gullies of Hell. One point to consider about that Strait Gate is that we must approach it straight on, not from a direction other than that which the Lord commands, and His Way is STRAIGHT!

There is a gate at Jerusalem at the northernmost boundary of the surrounding wall called the Sheep Gate. This gate, and others of Jerusalem, is mentioned in Nehemiah 3:1-32, in order, and in other parts of Scripture. The description of the Sheep Gate occurs first (Neh 3:1) and other gates in counter-clockwise sequence, but it is the Sheep Gate that is also mentioned last of all again (Neh 3:31). Why do you suppose this is the case? It is because Jesus is the Lamb of God (the Alpha and Omega, and the Beginning and End).

All things begin with Him ¹ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* ² *The same was in the beginning with God.* ³ *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* (John 1:1-3); and the end of all things are in Christ: ²⁰ *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.* Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.* Amen. (Rev 22:20-21) Aren't there amazing little gems hidden away in Holy Writ to entice the seeker to dig deeper?

The Sheep Gate clearly is indicative of the Lamb which was slain *without the gate* for our sins. A gate symbolizes a place to both ENTER and to DEPART. Entering in to the Strait Gate means a departure from the sinful trails of the world and embarking upon that Way that leads upward and onward. So exactly what is the Strait Gate? That Gate is Christ! *Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* (John 10:7-9) The DOOR has two sides – the side of haven for the sheep, and the other side of dangers and snares of the world. The only safe place is inside the Door with the Shepherd which is Christ. The mountain sheep folds of the Middle East are cavernous enclosures with a rock wall that has an opening for the sheep to enter. Only those sheep that belong to the shepherd are allowed to enter. The gate is then closed. None enter or depart once the gate is closed. One day in the future That Gate will open in Heaven and only those who belong to the Good Shepherd will be admitted. Then that Gate will be closed in Eternity. It is very much like the Door of the Ark of Noah which the Lord closed (not Noah) to the lost humanity without the Gate (Door).

³ *Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.* ⁴ *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.* (Psalm 100:3-4) Once the sheep are safely folded in the sanctuary of safety, the gate must be closed to prevent the world from entering into that safe place, but also to prevent the little lambs from wandering abroad into places of danger in the world. Unfortunately, in many modern churches, the gate is left wide open for the world to infiltrate where it is not supposed to be – worldly music, unbiblical preaching, and irreverent worship.

Our homes have a gate (door), too, that must be kept shut and locked from the dangers without. Unfortunately, many of our children are free to roam the streets of the world without any godly counsel of Christian parents. They wander aimlessly the streets of drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, and ever wicked perversion imaginable. It is my prayer that good mothers and fathers around the world will open the Door of Home to the children and close the door to the world to prevent their prodigality.

What of the Sin-Gate? Are there sufficient bars to barricade that gate? No! That gate is ALWAYS open and inviting. Temptations lies at the entrance always. The only bars to that gate are wisdom that comes from God, righteous habitual living, and a full reliance on God's Word as a Lamp to our Feet and a Light to our Path.

There is also a gate of the heart that might be called the Mouth Gate. ³⁴ *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* ³⁵ *A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.* ³⁶ *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* ³⁷ *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* (Matt 12:34-37) The tongue is one instrument that reflects the very soul of man, and is the most difficult to vanquish for evil. ⁷ *For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:* ⁸ *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.* ⁹ *Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men,*

which are made after the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. 13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. (James 3:7-13)

The egregious injury a loose tongue can elicit is immeasurable for intensity. I have seen idle gossip ruin lives and destroy homes.

Another gate could be called the Ear/Eye Gate. Whatever enters the heart through these portals cannot be evacuated. The evil and sensual images that enter these portals register indelibly on the film of the soul. But these images can be covered by earnest Bible study and biblical living, and resulting sin may be covered by the blood of Christ. If we make righteous living a strong habit of life, the bad habits of the past will fall away into oblivion. The Ear/Eye Gate must be closed to the evils of the world and opened to the glorious message of the Gospel.

Would we be healed of that deadly disease that fell upon Adam and his progeny? Then seek the healing at the Beautiful Gate – the tallest gate of the Temple, and one made of polished Corinthian brass. *2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. (Acts 3:1-11)*