

Matthew 7:13-28

In this passage, we reach the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. This is the appeal Christ has been moving towards throughout the whole sermon. Here He gives the call to decide now about becoming a citizen of God's Kingdom and inheriting eternal life or remaining a citizen of this fallen world and receiving damnation.

- First, we read of the path and gate into the Kingdom of Heaven.

13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. 14 How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.

- Followed by a warning against the guides of this world that will lead you astray.

15 "Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. 16 You'll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree can't produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So you'll recognize them by their fruit.

- And the admonition that in following the wrong guides, along the wrong paths, there will not be an entrance to the Kingdom awaiting you.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?' 23 Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!'

- And the last illustration Christ delivers in the sermon is the consequences of following, and of not heeding these Words of Christ. A firm foundation will be blessed, but a false foundation will be destroyed.

24 "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash."

- Perhaps you can imagine your own reaction to hearing Christ speak these words. Astonishment is certainly an appropriate response. Recognizing Christ's authority is also correct. But whether the target audience heeded these words, is the most telling of whether they responded correctly.

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, 29 because He was teaching them like One who had authority, and not like their scribes.

Parallels:

The Narrow Gate: Matt. 17:13-14/Luke 6:23-24

Test of a Good Person: Matt. 7:15-20, [3:10](#), [12:33-35](#)/Luke 6:43-45, [3:9](#)

Self-Deception: Matt. 7:21-23/Luke 6:46, 13:26-27

Hearers and Doers of the Word: Matt. 7:24-27/Luke 47-49

End of the Sermon: Matt. 7:28-29/Mark 1:21-22/ Luke 41:31-21, [7:1a](#)

Comparisons to provoke additional reflection of the meanings of these verses:

- [Matt.3:10/Luke 3:9](#) – the ax is ready to strike the root. Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.
- [Luke 7:1a](#) – when He finished preaching, He went to Capernaum (east along the Northern coast of the Sea of Galilee).
- [Matt. 12:34b-35](#) – “for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks” ... (good things come out of good treasures/bad things come out of bad treasures). Compare to Matt. 7:17, a good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree bears bad fruit; and Matt. 6:21 Where your heart is, there your treasure will be also.

Contrasts:

Matthew 7	Luke
:13 enter through the narrow <u>gate</u>	6:24 <u>strive</u> to enter through the narrow <u>door</u>
:14 there are <u>few</u> who <u>find it</u>	6:24 <u>many</u> will try to enter it and will <u>not be able</u>
:18 a good tree <u>cannot</u> bear bad fruit, <u>nor can</u> a bad tree bear good fruit	6:43 no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit
:20 <u>you will know them</u> by their fruits	6:44 each tree is <u>known</u> by its fruit
:21 not everyone who says to me LORD, LORD will enter ... only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven.	6:46 Why do you call me “LORD, LORD” and do not do what I tell you?
:22 LORD, LORD did we not prophesy in Your Name/cast down demons/do many deeds in Your Name?	13:26 We ate and drank with You, and You taught in our streets
:23 I <u>never knew you</u>	13:27 I <u>do not know where you come from</u>
:24 like a <u>wise</u> man	6:48 like a man
:24 <u>built</u> his house	6:48 <u>building</u> a house
:24 on a rock	6:48 dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock
:25 ran fell, floods came, wind blew	6:48 a flood arose, the river burst against that house
:25 but it <u>did not fall</u>	6:48 but <u>could not shake it</u>
:25 because it had been <u>founded on rock</u>	6:48 because it had been <u>well built</u>
:26 <u>everyone</u> who hears these words	6:49 the <u>one</u> who hears
:26 like a <u>foolish</u> man	6:49 like a man
:26 built his house on <u>sand</u>	6:49 built a house <u>on the ground without a foundation</u>
:27 and it fell	6:49 <u>immediately</u> it fell
:27 great was its <u>fall</u>	6:49 great was <u>the ruin of that house</u>

Notes:

- Everyone must decide **BOTH** the gate and the way he will go.
- Notice there are **ONLY** two ways. There isn't a 3rd, 4th, or 5th option. It is EITHER: the narrow or the wide gate; the narrow or the broad way; life or destruction (destinations). There are two groups: the few, and the many. Two kinds of trees: the good and the bad. Two kinds of fruit are produced: good and bad. Two kinds of people profess faith in Jesus: the sincere and the false. Two builders: the wise and the foolish. Two foundations: rock and sand. Two houses: secure and insecure. 2 choices: You will choose Jesus, or you will NOT.
- Enter (Strong's 1525 **εἰσέρχομαι**, eiserchomai) to go in (to), enter. Usage in Matt. 7:13 is **Εἰσελθατε**, eiselthate, the aorist imperative tense – “You, enter” which demands a specific action. The command is not to admire or ponder the gate – and the command is for a specific gate. Every person enters one gate or the other. It is unavoidable. Jesus is pleading for you to enter the right gate!

Greek Words from the text to consider for deeper meaning:

Narrow (Strong's 4728 **στενός**, sten-os') narrow, straight. the closely-defined path God ordains to travel on to gain His approval (used three times in the NT).

Difficult (Strong's 2346 **τεθλιμμένη**, te-thlimme'-ne) make narrow by pressure (constricted); press upon, persecute, press hard.

Destruction (Strong's 684 **ἀπώλεια**, apóleia) cut off *destruction*, causing someone (something) to be *completely severed* – cut off (entirely) from what *could or should* have been. This is not the destruction of extinction or annihilation, but it is the “loss of well-being” rather than “being.”

Hear the testimony of a West Indian who had chosen Islam over Christianity. He said his reason for selecting Islam was that it “*is a noble, broad path. There is room for a man and his sin on it. The way of Christ is too narrow.*” He understands the concept of the broad and narrow path better than many Christians – and he chose according to the correct interpretation the broad path that would allow him to continue according to the lifestyle that accommodates sin. This is the correct understanding – but not the correct choice.