“One Life – Two Paths – Two Choices – Two Destinations – One Eternity”

Matthew 7:13-14

Most people place the greatest significance on life’s journey, not its ultimate destination

Pursuing pleasure, seeking happiness, realizing vocational goals, attaining wealth, enjoying retirement

These are the things which are prioritized above everything else

The end of life’s journey, for the most part is an afterthought

To most, life beyond the grave is not an absolute certainty

People generally hope it is true and if it is true believe they will be good enough to go to heaven if it really exists

But we have no live recording of heaven to visually verify it’s actual existence

Yes, there have been instances where people who have died and come back to life have made claims they went to heaven

But, unfortunately they could not take their cell phone with them, to record their alleged experiences

It is no more than a subjective experience which cannot be irrefutably proven

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However, there is a huge difference when we consider Christ made claims of life truly existing beyond our earthly existence

The Bible says He is the one who created everything John 1:1-3: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

He Himself stated He came from heaven to the earth John 6:32,38: “And Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world…For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Jesus also died, was dead for three days and came back to life and made personal appearances for forty days I Corinthians 15:3-8: “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.”

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He also ascended up into heaven before the eyes of His disciples and this was verified by angels Acts 1:9-11: “Now when he had spoke these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up in heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven’.”

So, if I am going to believe anyone’s testimony that the afterlife is real, I am going to believe Him

Nothing Jesus stated about eternity’s real existence had any hint of speculation attached to it

This is clearly evident when we examine the verses we’re considering today

In this instance, Jesus spoke in very simple terms when teaching what was a vitally important truth

He did not want anyone listening to Him to misunderstand what He was saying

Therefore, He used an easily visualized illustration to make His point

There are two paths in life with two gates at the end of life

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These are not actual gates but illustrative pictures of entrance at life’s end from what is temporal into what is eternal

There is a narrow gate with only a few entering into it and a wide gate with the vast majority of people entering into it

So according to Jesus, there’s only two gates people can go through with two ultimate destinations – heaven and hell

There is no third way or fourth way with other possible eternal destinations

As such, what Christ proclaimed about two paths and two gates is thus an exclusive truth statement

Buddhists believe there is a path and a gate to nirvana

Jesus says there is not

Hindus believe there is a path and a gate to incarnation

Jesus says there is not

Mormons believe there is a path and a gate to ruling one’s own planet

Jesus says there is not

Catholics believe there is path and a gate to purgatory

Jesus says there is not

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John 5:24: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

The apostle Paul verified this when he wrote when believers die they immediately go into God’s presence – 2 Corinthians 5:8

Now, there’s another group of people we must also consider – atheists

They do not believe any gateway into the afterlife exists

One only has temporary physical existence and once life ends oblivion is the inevitable result

Again, I will take Christ’s word over an atheists word anytime

Jesus said there’s only two actual pathways and two actual destinations

There are no exemptions to what Christ professed to be true

Everyone is on one of two pathways and will enter through one of two gateways into eternity

This has immediate application to us right now

Every church has a percentage of people attending it who aren’t on the narrow road to heaven

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Now let’s consider the two pathways and entrances themselves

Why are most on the broad and not the narrow way?

Why is the narrow way so much difficult to follow?

Let’s unpack this together

The broad road is the way of autonomy, i.e. self-rule

It’s the way of popularity, least resistance, human self-determination and self-fulfillment

It’s the way of DIY religious effort

If there’s a heaven, I will get there my own way, on my own terms, by my own innate goodness

Furthermore, most people are on it so it must be okay

Surely the vast majority cannot have it wrong

Furthermore, it’s much easier to concentrate on the here and now and neglect one’s unavoidable finality

Who wants to think about it if you don’t have to?

It’s much easier to live by sight rather than by faith

These are the reasons why the broad road is over-populated with so many people

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However, the narrow road is the way of humility

Believing and following Jesus requires much more self-denial and self-sacrifice

Turn with me to Matthew 10:32-39

Matthew 16:24-25: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

Luke 14:25-27;33: “Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple…so likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

John 15:18-19: “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Ye because you are not the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

Acts 14:21-22: “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

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2 Timothy 3:12: “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

According to Christ, true Christians are by far the minority

There’s relatively few who find the narrow path to heaven

This is a truth which universalists cannot accept but Christ says it’s undeniably true

If we are on the narrow road leading into heaven, we should be very thankful

We could easily be on the broad road to eternal punishment

The apostle Paul recognized this, and he was overwhelmed by God’s amazing grace, 1 Timothy 1:12-16

Everyone is on the broad road at birth since everyone’s born as a sinner

How do we change pathways?

Recognize, repent, receive

The longer we wait to believe Christ as our Savior, the more unlikely it is we will ever be on the narrow path

Statistics say you have less than one in four chance of becoming a Christian after the age of 21

The broad and narrow pathways don’t run parallel to one another

They spread out in the shape of a “v”