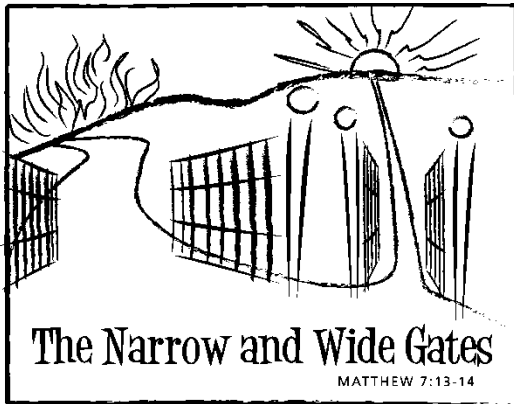


# SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

## LESSON 8



## THE WAY INTO THE KINGDOM

*Scripture Texts: Matthew 4:17; Luke 18:17; Mark 16:16; Matthew 11:12; John 3:3-8; Colossians 1:12-14*

The way into the kingdom is the way into salvation. The kingdom of God is the rule of God in the hearts of man. When His rule is established in one's heart, that one has been taken into the kingdom. He is now suitable material to be fitted into the Church of God. To receive Christ, the King, is to enter His kingdom.

Man's part in salvation is repentance, believing in Christ, and commitment to Him. God's part is to give life to the soul, and take him into His kingdom.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*  
—*John 3:5*

### Repentance

**Matthew 4:17** Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The opening message of both John and Jesus was repentance. This is the first step on our part—let go of sin, quit our sins, cast them away, and hate them. True repentance brings confession—owning the guilt of our sins, and owning ourselves as sinners. This includes owning to God our need for Him, and our inability to help ourselves. Restitution is a part of repentance—righting of all our wrongs possible to be righted, confessing to and asking forgiveness of those wronged. Repentance is the painful and hard part of entrance to the kingdom. The gate that leads to life is narrow, and few there be that find it—life—because they refuse the strait gate (**Matthew 7:13-14**). To make any other choice leads to death.

**Luke 13:17** He who does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter. The childlike nature is better understood by observing a child than from description. It is humble, submissive, tender, trusting, obedient, honest, open, and receptive. We need this childlike attitude to make repentance possible. This same attitude continues in the saved one, making him receptive to the leading of God.

### Believing

**Mark 16:16** **He that believeth . . .** We must believe Jesus Christ to be the all-powerful Son of God. We must believe His sacrifice of Himself on the Cross to be in place of ourselves for our sins. We must accept it as applying to us personally. True belief is not only knowledge, it is trust. The repentant one may not list these points in his mind nor fully understand them, but his heart must accept them. He must trust Jesus to change His heart and do all for him that he needs.

**And is baptized shall be saved.** Baptism in water is the outward symbol of the inward baptism into Christ. The outward burial in water pictures the death and burial of the old life of sin, and the resurrection to a new life in Christ. Water baptism is commanded by Jesus when one has repented. Water baptism does not wash away one's sins. It only shows to the public a commitment to Christ. By this he seals and makes it final (**Romans 6:3-4**). Without a death to sin the symbol of baptism, alone, has not benefit.

### Earnest Determination

**Matthew 11:12** The violent take it (the kingdom) by force. He that will take the kingdom—get into it—must be in earnest. Satan will oppose him in every step he takes. He must be determined to give up his sins and evil companions. He must have his soul saved at all costs, and at every expense, or he will surely perish

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everlastingly. This requires a violent earnestness. To him that overcometh temptation, sin and Satan, Jesus Christ will grant to sit with Him in His throne (**Revelation 3:21**). What a rich reward for faithfulness! One must be prepared to accept any suffering (and it will come) which serving Christ brings and be not turned aside by it (**Romans 8:17**). This makes us joint-heirs with Christ.

In **Revelation 21:8** we see how those of opposite mind—the fearful—are left to the lake of fire. It takes earnest determination to carry repentance through to its successful end (**Mark 9:43-48**). Since we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, it is not for the half-hearted, weak, or those wishing to turn back (**Acts 14:22**).

### Jesus, the Door

**John 3:3-8** We have looked at our part in being saved (or entering the kingdom)—repentance, believing, and commitment. But these alone could never save a soul, because except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. No one can do this for himself. Being born is entering into life. No dead thing can give life to itself. God must give life to the soul through the Word (or water) and the Spirit. There is no other way but through Christ. Jesus described this new birth to Nicodemus as a work of the Holy Spirit—born of the Spirit—and as we cannot see the wind's coming and going. The human mind cannot fully comprehend how God works in the new birth. But when we do our part God does His, and the soul is saved. We, and others, will recognize that a change has taken place.

**Colossians 1:12-14** It is God who hath made us meet—given us the privilege, made it possible—for us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints. The inheritance is the kingdom. It is God who translates us from Satan's kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son—the kingdom of light (**1 John 1:5**). It is through the blood of Jesus Christ that this change—our redemption—is brought about. In no other way can we be forgiven, cleansed, and made alive spiritually. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission (**Hebrews 9:22**). Only Christ's blood, or our faith in Christ's blood, is sufficient.

### JUST A THOUGHT

**It is not the whistling that makes the locomotive go,  
it is the silent steam.**

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