

# The Wide Gate and the Narrow Way

## By Walter Wilson

Wilson:

That there are pairs of people. One that went the wide gate and the Broadway the other who went the narrow gate and the narrow way. I think it will be interesting for us to examine these characters because perhaps we shall find in the seven pairs that we shall consider your own case. It may be, of course, nothing has any value unless you apply it to yourself. If you see the bus on the street, you know, although it's commodious, it will not take anyone downtown except those who get on it.

And the drugstore has every kind of remedy but it'll do no good except to those who take it. And the bread and the groceries in the store are all, of course, very fine nutritious and helpful and remedial. But they do you no good unless you take them. Well, that's true of everything in life. You go in a clothing store and all the beautiful suits and dresses are of no use unless you get one and put it on yourself.

So it is in the things of God. God's salvation and God's remedies and God's promises have no value except as you apply them to yourself. And now we find some cases in which one applied and one did not notice first the case of Ruth and Orpah. You find it in the book of Ruth. These two young ladies were sisters in law.

They had married brothers. Both the brothers had died. And Naomi, their mother in law, started back to Jerusalem. Well, they both thought they'd go with her. They loved her.

She was a delightful woman. They decided to go with her. And so, arm in arm, heart to heart, hand in hand the three of them start off to leave Moab and go up to Jerusalem. Well, they went along quite nicely together until the hills of Moab began to get dim in the distance and the music ceased and she could no longer see her loved ones and those with whom she'd been raised and for whom she cared. And so Orpah kissed her mother in law goodbye.

She was going back to her people, going back to her idols going back to her dancing and her wine and all the things that more have had so richly in abundance. But Ruth, she cleaved to Naomi. She said, where thou goest, I will go. Where thou diest, I will die. Why it's just wonderful the way that she stood by this woman of God who is going up to God's house going up where God dwelt going up to God's people, going up to the living God.

For the gods of Moab were only wood and stone and silver and gold with no power of any kind and no life of any kind. She went all the way. But Orpah turned back. She thought she wanted that narrow road and that narrow way. And when she got right to the edge of Moab where she had to leave the country and go into a new country.

She decided against it. Now, there are lots of folks like that. They decide they want to be Christians, so they're going to trust the Lord Jesus and be among God's people and live for God

and turn the back on Moab, which is a type of the world. But the companions come along, come on, let's go back. Let's go and do what we used to do.

And the temptation and the desire is so strong that one will turn back and go back into the world, back to the things that once attracted, while the other goes steadfastly on, gives the heart and soul and the life to the Lord Jesus, has new companions, new songs to sing, a new book to read, a new association entirely new investments for the money. And everything is new and delightful and precious, while the other goes back to the world. The flesh, the devil and a Christless grave. That's those two.

The next two we think about are Nicodemus and Pilate. Now, they both of them face the Lord Jesus. Both were face to face with the Son of God. Both were near enough to touch him. They could see him breathe.

They were very near to him. Nicodemus as an inquiring man and Pilate as a judge. Both of them had to decide what they would do with Jesus. Perhaps neither one of them were thinking about eternity, when they would have to face Him and they would wonder what he was going to do with them. No, that time hadn't come yet.

Jesus was on the earth, living as a man, a perfect man and a wonderful man. And really, Jesus was a competitor of both of these men. For Nicodemus was the leader of the religion of Israel, and Pilate was the leader of the conquerors of Israel. And the Lord Jesus came to take charge of

the religion of the people and to become King of Kings and Lord of Lords and rule over the people. So really, Jesus was a competitor of both Nicodemus and Pilate.

Well, what did they do about it? Nicodemus listened to him as Jesus said, except you be born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven except you're born again, Nicodemus. You cannot see the kingdom of God. And in Pilate's case, he didn't answer him at all, except on one occasion he said, you remember, you could have no power at all against me, except that were given you from above. He wouldn't talk to Pilate.

He had no interest in Pilate. He didn't try to get Pilate to let him go. Pilate didn't come to ask anything of Jesus. Nicodemus did. And as they both stood face to face with Christ, they had to decide in their hearts what they would do with Him.

Nicodemus decided to receive him, enter through this narrow gate into the narrow way that leads to life, while Pilate chose the Broad way. Why? They said the people said if you let this man go, let Jesus go, you're not a friend of Caesar's. Well, he wanted to be Caesar's friend, but he didn't want to be Jesus' friend. And so he decided to scourge Jesus, though he had no reason for it.

He himself said he had no reason for it, yet he did it anyway. And then hand him over to the soldiers to be taken out and crucified. Beloved. Both of them were near enough to be saved. Both of them saw the Savior closely, face to face.

And yet one chose the narrow way that was Nicodemus. And Pilate chose the way of the world. The Broad way that leads down to destruction. The next two we think of is Jacob and Esau. Now.

Jacob and Esau were two boys of Isaac. You remember? And there were blessings to be had. In those days, somehow the Father's blessing seemed to be worth something. And it seems as though the Father knew what to say to his boys.

And the blessing that he gave them seemed to come to pass somehow. We don't understand it these days, but Isaac wanted to give Esau the blessing and his blessing was worth something. But Jacob wanted that blessing. Isn't it interesting now that both these boys want the blessing of their father? Wouldn't it be wonderful if that was so today?

And if boys wanted the faith of their fathers? By the way, I wonder if you fathers have got any faith. Did your boy ever come to you, dear father, and say dad, I want to know your God. I want to know God as you know Him. I want Him to do things in my life like he's done them in your life.

Did that ever happen to you? You men who are fathers and you boys that may be listening, or girls, did you ever go to your father or mother and say say, father, Mother, I would like to know the God that you know. I want to be interested in the things you're interested in from heaven. Did they ever come to you about that? Or did you ever go to them and say my boy, my girl, I want you to know God as I know Him.

I've had some wonderful experiences walking with Him. And I've seen his delivering hand, his loving care over and over again. And I want you children to know him as I know him. Did that ever happen to you? Well, I'll leave that with you.

Isaac wanted to give his blessing to Esau but Jacob wanted it so you remember that Jacob's mother fixed up some veal and made it taste like venison. She was very clever. And she fixed it up so that she fooled poor old blind Isaac the father. And you noticed that he smelt.

The raiment said, you smell all right. And he felt him and said, you feel alright? But when he listened to him, he said, your voice isn't Esau's voice. It's Jacob's voice. And so Jacob got the blessing.

Now, what happened to Esau, he just took the opposite course. He didn't want God, the God of his father, he didn't want him. Jacob did, but Esau didn't. And you remember 2000 years after these boys died, God said, Jacob, have I loved, but Esau have I hated. He said that 2000 years after the boys were dead, 2000 years after they had lived their lives.

And if you read the life of Esau, you find he was against everything that God wanted. He was against all the laws of God, all the rules of God, all the ways of God. He didn't want anything to do with God. He shut him out of his life. And of course, his descendants to this day are the worst enemies of the Gospel.

That there are nobody's quite as bitter against the Gospel and as hard on the missionaries as the descendants of Esau. But Jacob's descendants my those great people, one day they're going to rule the world again. So here are two one chose God's blessings, the other one rejected the blessings. Jacob wanted the blessing. Esau turned against God.

When he found he didn't get the blessing. He was perfectly willing to sell out what blessing he did have. You remember before even Jacob, Esau came for the blessing. And before Jacob got it, why, Esau sold his right to it. He sold it to Jacob.

It belonged to Jacob. He sold it for a mess of pottage. He said, what good will this birthright do to me? He didn't want the blessing of God and Jacob got it. Then he hated Jacob.

That really showed what kind of a heart he had, what kind of a man he was. So Jacob took the narrow road, the narrow gate. Esau chose the broad road and the broad gate. Now you ask your heart, do I want the blessing of God? I don't mean necessarily and only money and position and fame and power and comforts.

I mean his blessing in your soul. The blessing of salvation, redemption, pardon, forgiveness. Or are you quite content to go without it? The next two that we shall think of is Abel and Cain.

Now, Abel brought the right kind of a sacrifice.

Here's what it says by faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, whereby he obtained righteousness. God admitted and acknowledged that Abel was righteous. Now

notice, it doesn't say he brought a better character, nor better life, nor more money, nor more prayers or anything else of that kind. It says Abel brought a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Abel brought a lamb that died for him.

Cain brought the vegetables that he had produced by his own labor in the sweat of his face, out of the ground. The ground was already cursed. So here we find that Abel chose the right sacrifice, Cain chose the wrong one. Abel chose the narrow gate. The narrow way but Cain chose the wide gate and the Broad way.

He wanted to do what everybody else did they brought the fruit of their labors, they brought the best that they could do they brought the products of the cursed ground for God had cursed the ground and God wouldn't have it. You ask your heart now, am I on the narrow way, the way of sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, the blood that was shed by Him for my sins. Are you on his side? Or are you on the side of Cain or abide by your works and labor and effort? You're going to merit salvation and you're going to earn your way into glory.

Well, that's the wide gate and the Broad way. Now we consider two more. And these are Moses and Korah. Korah, you remember, was one of the great men of Israel. And Moses, of course, was the leader.

And Korah became jealous of Moses. He said, now, you don't need to think you're the only one. You're not the only pebble on the beach. I am as good as you are. And Korah, Dathan and Abiram led a rebellion against the leadership of Moses.



Well, God had made Moses what he was. God had told Moses what his position was to be. God had chosen Moses. Moses didn't choose God and God put him in the place of leadership. But along came Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

These three men, they decided they knew better than God did, that they were just good as Moses, just as great as Moses, just as good leaders as Moses. And therefore they weren't going to stand for it to have this autocracy one man setting himself up to be boss of all those 3 million Jewish people. And so they formed this rebellion and they came to Moses and told him about it. Well, you remember Moses just went his clothes and fell down on the ground. He was so humble.

And he told him, he said, why God made me what I am. And he made you what you are. You ought to be so pleased that he's picked you out to be leaders of the people that you shouldn't want my place. But they are determined. They're going to dethrone Moses and cast him out.

So Moses went to God about it. That's always a good thing to do when you're in trouble in the church or folks turn against you because of your leadership and your ability and jealousies and envies creep in among God's people. And they shouldn't well go right to God about it. He knows how to vindicate, he knows how to settle things. He knows how to fix things.

And he did in this case. Now, he did a strange thing. He told Moses to have all the people get away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. So all the people of Israel moved

away, clear away from around the tents of these three men. And these three men stood in the tent door with their families and with their belongings.

And suddenly the scripture says God did a new thing, something that had never been done before. The Earth opened up a great wide crack right underneath the tents of these three men. All these stories in Leviticus [note: story is in Numbers] Chapter 16. You can easily read it for yourself. And there these three men, their tents and their equipment and everything they had and their families, all except the Sons of Korah went down into hell alive.

Now, you don't need to shrug your shoulders. That's exactly what your Bible says. And I don't care what Bible you have or what religion you belong to. In your Bible, you read that story.

Three men who went down alive into hell.

God said he was going to do a new thing. Something never was done before, never has been done since. It wasn't the grave he was talking about because thousands of people have been buried in graves alive. Where earthquakes came and landslides and eruptions of volcanoes. All that sort of thing has buried people alive.

But this was a new thing. God said it was a brand new thing that anybody would go down alive into hell. Of course, as you know, hell is in the heart of this earth. It's just 11 miles below where you're sitting right now. Just 11 miles.

And these three men and their families, except the Sons of Korah went down alive into hell while Moses went on about his work glorifying God, honoring the name of the Lord, blessing the people of God, leading them and getting messages for them from the God of heaven. So Moses took the narrow path, God's path and the narrow way while Korah took the broad path and the Broad way. But here it was a question of being willing to take God's place. These three men didn't want to take the place God gave them. They want a higher place.

They rebelled against God's disposition of their lives. That's the Broad way and Broad gate. That's the way the world does. O beloved, let me urge you. You take God's path.

If he wants you to be a humble Christian in a humble place of obscurity take it with gladness. Do the best you can for God where you are. We look at another couple now. That's Solomon and Absalom. These two were sons of David, and they were splendid sons.

Absalom, we read, was so beautiful that he was more attractive than any other man in Israel. It says that from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot there wasn't a blemish in him. No whims, no scars, no marks, no warts, nothing extraneous. Nothing unusual. He had a perfect body, but a terrible heart.

Solomon, on the other hand, was a lovely boy. His name means that one whom God loves. And God had a special favor for that precious boy. And he was an ideal son and his father loved him too. Well, here were the two boys now who is going to be king? David's going to die one of these

days. Who will take his place? Well, one of his sons, of course. Well, Absalom decided that he was the one.

I'm going to be king. I'll take my father's place. I'm going to be the head of this army. And so he secretly set about to do so. Solomon, however, to whom God promised the kingdom and told David he was going to set him on the throne.

He was willing to wait for God's time. He didn't try any scheme or plan to become king. He was quite willing to wait until God made him king. I think he learned that perhaps from his father, David because remember, for 14 years, King Saul chased David, although David had been anointed king. But David made no effort to become the king.

He didn't try to get an army away from Saul. He didn't try an insurrection or rebellion or revolution. No. He just suffered at Saul's hand and hid in the caves waiting God's time to make him king. So Solomon did.

But the time came when Absalom said, no, sir, I'm going to be like other people. I'm going to start a rebellion. And so he visited the army and he was kind to them and he spoke honeyed words to them and he won the hearts of the people. And he stood in the gate. And when the people came in with their troubles and lawsuits and so on, he would say, oh, my, if only I was king, I tell you, I'd get justice for you.

I'd listen to your case and your cause, and I would fix it up. That's the way he did. And so he stole the hearts of the people. And after a while, the whole army followed Absalom and David had to fly for his life.

In fact, he had to go so quickly he didn't even have time to put his shoes on for it says he was climbing the Mount of Olives barefooted and weeping as he went. But the time came. In fact, it was only a few days until as he rode through the woods with his army trying to capture his father David, his head got caught in a tree and he was killed by Joab while he hung in the tree. But Solomon went on to become the world's greatest king the most wealthy and the most powerful in many, many ways. What a marvelous man Solomon became.

He waited God's time. The one took the narrow road while Absalom took the broad road and the broad gate. The last pair of men we shall think of will be Peter and Judas. Now, Christ looked on both of them. Christ loved both of them.

Christ called both of them. He asked them to become his devoted followers. He trusted both of them, especially Judas. He became the treasurer of the band and was looked up to by all the other disciples and the people. And all the funds that were given were put into his bag and he held it and he spent it.

Both of these men were followers of the Savior for three and a half years. Nobody was closer. They slept with him, they ate with him, they traveled with him. They were at his meetings. They watched his miracles.

But look at the different effect. Peter became such a loyal, devoted lover and follower of the Lord Jesus while Judas sold him for 30 pieces of silver, about \$17.50. One loved the Lord Jesus. The other hated the Lord Jesus. The one wanted to be continually with Christ.

The other one was glad to get out of his presence and get away from him. You know, if you put wax in the sun, it will melt. But if you put clay in the sun, it will get hard. If you put potatoes in hot water, they get soft. But if you put eggs in hot water, they become hard.

And the rain falls on some ground, it produces wheat. It falls on other ground, produces thorns and thistles and jimson weed and dog fennel. And whatnot you see, beloved, you have to ask your heart, what am I like? When the word of God falls on my heart and the love of God is poured out into my ears, what does it do to me? Am I like Peter learning to love Christ Jesus and walk with him and trust him with the soul and heart and life?

Or am I like Judas who saw the same things, heard the same words, understood the same messages and saw the same miracles? But in Judas, it made a heart that hated the Savior. And in Peter, it made a heart that said and he said it honestly. He meant it when he said it lord, I would die with thee. Of course, he did fail.

And when the maid accused him, he denied it with oaths and curses. And finally, when he was able to get out of the High Priest house it said he forsook Jesus and fled with the others. But he

meant all right. He intended it. And in fact, when Jesus looked upon him it said that Peter went out and wept bitterly.

But Judas went out and hung himself. See the difference? One was on the narrow road that leads to life. That was Peter. The other was on the broad road that goes down to destruction and that was Judas.

So you ask your heart am I a Ruth or an Orpah? Am I a Nicodemus or a Pilate? Am I a Jacob or an Esau. Am I an Abel or a Cain? Am I a Moses or a Korah?

Am I a Solomon or an Absalom? Am I a Peter or a Judas? And nobody knows better than you. And, beloved, if you are in that second category. Let me urge you to go alone with Christ.

Look at his lovely face. Consider those wounded hands and feet inside and then falling down in his presence say my Lord and my God he will make you all that your heart could want want. He will take you to be with Himself someday and forever and forever you will be glad that you made Jesus Christ your Lord, your Savior and your redeemer.