

## Seeing And Entering the Kingdom Of God

John 3:1 to 12: 'There was a man among the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler among the Jews who came to Jesus at night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God, for no one can do the miracles You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered him, "I seriously tell you, that unless a person is born-again from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God ... Unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God ... Do not be surprised at My telling you, you must all be born-again."

Nicodemus answered by asking, "How can this be possible?"

Jesus replied, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet do not know nor understand these things? ... If I have told you of things that happen right here on the earth and yet none of you believes Me, how can you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"

What is the difference between seeing the Kingdom of God, and entering into the Kingdom of God? To answer that question, is to liken the difference between standing outside Buckingham Palace in cold, rainy, wintry, British weather, being able to see the vast building, see the people who work there in all their finery, and watching tourists come and go. Compare that to being invited to enter inside to enjoy the magnificent, warm décor, taste the beautiful food, appreciate the spectacular artworks, stroll down the long hallways, being waited on and actually meeting the Monarch face to face. Understanding the difference in those terms, sheds a whole new light to seeing and entering into the Kingdom of God. The two are opposite ends of the eternal spectrum. Many will see the Kingdom of God, but few will actually enter. Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads away to destruction (hell), and many are those who are entering through it. But the gate is narrow and the way is straitened that leads away to (eternal) life, and few are those who find it" (Matthew 7:13 & 14).

Jesus made it very clear; we have to be born-again if we want to go to heaven as He told Nicodemus. He strengthened that by adding we should not be surprised at being told we must be born-again, but He also knew many people would not believe Him. It is the same today – many people do not believe we must be born-again to see the Kingdom of God, and we must be baptised in water and filled with the Holy Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God. There are a lot of people, including many Christians who refuse to believe that, even though it was Jesus Himself Who said that. The vast difference between 'seeing' and 'entering' the Kingdom of God is made clear in a powerful illustration in the New Testament. If we read the story of the rich man and the destitute man named Lazarus, we can see that the rich man could see the Kingdom of God from hell but could not get there; and Lazarus had entered the Kingdom of God and was at peace.

'There was a certain rich man who clothed himself in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate there was a certain utterly destitute man named Lazarus, begging alms and covered with sores. He desired to be satisfied with what fell from the rich man's table. The dogs came and licked his sores. It occurred that Lazarus died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus at his side. The rich man cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame."

But Abraham said, "Son, remember that you in your lifetime fully received comforts and Lazarus in like manner the discomforts? Now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. Besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed in order that those who want to pass from here to you may not be able, and no one may pass from there to us. "

The man said, "Then, father, I beseech you to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers so that he may give true testimony and warn them, lest they too come into this place of torment."

Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

But the man answered, "No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."

Abraham said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe even if someone should rise from the dead" (Luke 16:19 to 31).

God makes it very clear, we have to be faithfully walking with Him at the time of our death if we want to go to heaven. The only way we can be presented to God as believers is to stay firmly in relationship with Jesus. 'Keep yourselves in the love of God; wait patiently for the mercy of our Lord Jesus the Messiah Who will bring you to eternal life. Show mercy to those who doubt. Strive to save others, snatching them out of the lake of fire. Now to Him Who is able to keep you from stumbling or falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory in great joy' (Jude 1:21 to 24). We have to be righteous not religious to get to heaven, and we can only become righteous by living in the grace of God. Merely believing in God is not

enough to get into heaven. Being a 'nice' or 'good' person is not enough. Tragically, many lovely people will end up in hell, because no matter how nice, kind and gentle natured they are, if they refuse to be saved God's way, then they will not be saved at all. We all have to be born-again, obey God and walk with Him daily in all sincerity to get to heaven. To refuse to be born-again is disobedience to a direct instruction given very clearly by Jesus Himself. We born-again believers must strive to save others by snatching them out of the eternal fire, and the only way to do that is by telling people the truth of the Gospel.

Every adult person who has ever lived and died will be raised from death. Some will go to heaven and receive their rewards for righteous living and righteous works, and some will go to the lake of fire as their judgement. 'Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt' (Daniel 12:2). God writes down everything every person has done while on earth, whether good or bad, and on Judgement Day, He will decide who goes to heaven and who goes to the lake of fire, according to what they have done. 'I (John) saw the dead, the great and the small standing before the (Great White) Throne of Judgement, and the books were opened. Another book was opened which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged by what they had done according to what was written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. Hades and death were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was hurled into the lake of fire' (Revelation 20:12 to 15). 'We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Jesus, so that each one may receive his reward according to what he has done in the body, whether good or evil' (2 Corinthians 5:10).

When Jesus was baptised the heavens were opened (Matthew 3:16; Acts 7:56). When Jesus was resurrected the tombs of the righteous were opened. 'The tombs were opened and many bodies of the Godly who had died were raised to life, and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they went into the holy city (Jerusalem) and appeared to many people' (Matthew 27:52 & 53). That was when heaven began to receive righteous people. The unsaved remained in Hades. The second we die our spirit leaves the body of flesh. The righteous will immediately go to heaven and Jesus will receive their spirit; 'While they were stoning Stephen he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"' (Acts 7:59). If they are non-believers and have rejected the notion of being born-again they go to hell, also called Hades, to await Judgement Day. Then the unsaved, unrighteous will be raised to be judged and condemned. 'He has appointed a day when He will judge the world righteously by a Man (Jesus) Whom He has ordained, and God has given this assurance to everyone by raising Jesus from the dead' (Acts 17:31).

Religious Christians who attend church but do not walk with God with full sincerity, but pay lip service will also be lost. God the Father said: "This people draw near Me with their mouths and honour Me with their lips but their hearts are far from Me; their reverence for Me is a commandment of men ... woe to those who hide their counsel deeply from the Lord, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, 'Who sees us? Who knows us?' You turn things upside down! Should the Potter be considered like clay? Should the thing that is made say of its Maker, 'He did not make me'; or the thing that is formed say of Him who formed it, 'He has no understanding?'" (Isaiah 29:13 to 16). Jesus said, "These people honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. They worship Me in vain and their teaching is the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8; Mark 7:6). Jesus also said; "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the (lake of) fire. Therefore, you will know them by their fruit. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name and driven out demons in Your name and done many mighty works in Your name?' And I will say to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who act wickedly'. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and obeys them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the Rock, and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had been founded on the Rock (Jesus). Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a stupid man who built his house on the sand, and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was its fall" (Matthew 7:19 to 27).

The scriptures are very clear ... we cannot get to heaven unless we obey the Gospel which is the will of God, we must repent, be baptised in water, be baptised in the Holy Spirit as an act of obedience and walk with Jesus every day of our lives without slipping back into sin. Having empty religion that denies the power of God and a pretended piety cannot save anyone. Jesus said, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness is more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:20). "For although they hold a form of religion, they deny the power of God. Avoid such people" (2 Timothy

3:5). Jesus said, "Woe to you Pharisees (ministers of religion), you hypocrites! For you shut the Kingdom of Heaven in men's faces; for you neither enter yourselves, nor do you allow those who are about to go in, to enter" (Matthew 23:14). The ministers of religion who refuse to tell people the full Gospel are like the Pharisees who shut the doors of heaven to the unsaved. They will see the Kingdom of God and will cry, "Lord, Lord," but will not enter. They will be like the rich man who refused to comfort Lazarus and will end up in anguish.

Eternal life is promised to all who choose to believe and accept Jesus as their Saviour. The Lord God and the Bride; that is whole true genuine Holy Spirit-filled Christian world are calling out to every person on earth to come to Jesus. 'The Holy Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" Let those who are listening say, "Come!" Let everyone who is thirsty and whoever desires to do it, let them come, take, and drink the water of Life freely' (Revelation 22:17). 'There is salvation through no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). For us to make it into heaven we must be walking with God at the time of our death. If we accept Jesus then walk away from Him, then we can lose the gift of eternal life and end up lost. 'Yet now has Jesus the Messiah reconciled you to God the Father in the body of His flesh through death, in order to present you holy, without blemish and blameless in the Father's presence, provided that you continue to stay in the faith in Jesus, well-grounded and steadfast, not moving away from the hope of the Gospel which you heard and which has been preached to every person under heaven' (Colossians: 1:22 & 23).

If we walk with Jesus, obey His commands and accept His help to overcome the many obstacles in this life that we face daily, we will enter into the Kingdom of God and Jesus will openly acknowledge us to God the Father and the angels. Jesus said, "They who overcome will be clad in white garments. I will not blot out their name from the Book of Life; I will acknowledge them as Mine and I will confess their name openly before My Father and before His angels" (Revelation 3:5).

Amen and God Bless you.

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