

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! In this edition we have an article provided by Gerald Edson titled, "The Strait and Narrow."

As always, I'm extending an invitation for submissions to be published in The Gospel Notes Newsletter (TGNN). Additionally, if you have a subject or a question that you would like to have covered in a future edition of TGNN, feel free to send me a note and I'll do my best to address it.

The primary criteria for inclusion of articles are these:

1. It should be oriented towards the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. It should use the scriptures as a source of information.
3. It should include the references for any quoted 3rd party sources.
4. It should not be political.

If you have a testimony to share, please send that to me and let me know if you would like it to be included in a future edition of the newsletter. Please keep in mind the four criteria listed above where applicable.

You can view previous editions of The Gospel Notes Newsletter (TGNN) in PDF (Portable Document Format) by going to:

<https://thechurchofjesuschrist.info/TheGospelNotesNewsletter>

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The current preaching schedule for the Springfield, Missouri Restoration Branch can be accessed at the following link:

<https://thechurchofjesuschrist.info/Resources/PreachingSchedule-July-August-2024.html>

If you do not wish to receive the newsletter, please let me know. All responses to me will be treated confidentially unless you tell me otherwise.

THE STRAIT AND NARROW

By Gerald D. Edson

(Matthew 7:22-23) Repent, therefore, and enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Jesus' teachings have numerous references to the need for repentance. In this quotation he points out just how strict the requirements are for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. The gate is strait, or narrow and demanding. Consider the Strait of Gibraltar. It is a narrow seaway (8.1 miles wide) connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, separating Europe from Africa – a very narrow passageway considering the vastness of the two bodies of water it connects. Even though it is quite deep and very navigable, ships pass through with caution. Similarly, the gate that opens into the narrow pathway that leads to eternal life is also narrow and must be entered with caution.

Of course, this gate and pathway are metaphoric in nature and not literal items, but the message is quite clear that entry into eternal life requires conscious effort and dedication to all of the teachings of Jesus. Passage through the gate is not the end of the journey. We must carefully navigate the narrow pathway that leads to the tree of life. However, God has not left us alone to find our way, for He has provided a guide to lead us and keep us on the narrow pathway.

(1 Nephi 2:62-69) And I beheld a rod of iron; and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood. And I also beheld a straight and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron, even to the tree by which I stood; And it also led by the head of the fountain unto a large and spacious field, as if it had been a world; And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood. And it came to pass that they did come forth and commence in the path which led to the tree. And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceeding great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost. And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; And they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.

(1 Nephi 2:78) . . . behold, he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree.

Nephi identifies the rod of iron as being the word of God, and also interprets the meaning of the living waters and the tree of life:

(1 Nephi 3:68) And it came to pass that I beheld the **rod of iron**, which my father had seen, **was the word of God**, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; **which are a representation of the love of God.** (emphasis added)

What happens to those who let go of the rod of iron, or release their grasp on the word of God? Nephi says that they “wandered off and were lost” (1Nephi 2:67).

Just how narrow is the pathway, or how strict are the requirements to remain on the path?

(Doctrine & Covenants Section 1:5f) for I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven;

The reward is great, consequently, the demands are also great. We all falter, commit sin, and wander from the pathway. This is part of our nature, but God has provided a way to find our way back to, and resume, our journey along the pathway. It is called repentance – separating ourselves from that which leads us away from the true pathway. This is a lifelong struggle that we must endure, constantly realigning our lives with the ideal as set forth by the Master. It is not an impossible task, but it requires perpetual attention to faithful obedience.