

To the Servants of the Most High God at Topeka, Kansas
Sunday, March 8, 2026

Are You on the Narrow Way and Going Through
the Strait Gate to Heaven? - A Spiritual Audit – Part 1

Mat. 7:13-14 *...Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many... go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

I recently opined that I wished I could confirm that we were on the path to



heaven – a “check in” and a mid-year performance appraisal as it were. It occurred to me that there are many places in the Scriptures that clearly state what the right way looks like. The LORD has provided many markers on this path to the promised land. This isn’t a mystery. Today and for the next several sermons we will do a scriptural/spiritual audit of this way, and I encourage you to make a self-assessment of whether you are in the narrow way and passing through the strait gate to eternal life or not. Do the signs indicate you have a lively hope for heaven (1 Pet. 1:3) OR a hypocrite’s hope that will perish (Job 8:13, 27:8)?

The Scottish preacher John Brown identifies several types of people regarding their hope for heaven:

- 1) **No Legitimate Hope for Heaven** - There are not a few people who have no hope regarding eternity. They have no faith, no solid belief in such subjects and therefore they can have no hope. They live their lives for the moment with no thought of eternity. [They have rejected the notion of a

Sovereign God. Rom. 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse].*

- 2) **Easily Jettisoned Hope** - Others have a kind of hope/faith for eternity, of which they are very willing to get rid of. [This hope fails under adversity, afflictions and time. These are like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright (Heb 12:16)].
- 3) **Faux Hope** - Others have a hope for heaven and it may be a strong hope. But they can give no satisfactory reason for their hope. The hope rests on no solid basis, but on false views of God and of themselves. [The faux Christians falls into this group. Mat. 7:22 *Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*]
- 4) **A Solid, Sustainable and Grounded Hope in Christ** - Let those who, through the faith of this truth, have hope, good hope, in them, prove its reality by purifying themselves as he, in whom they hope is pure; and let them seek to grow in hope that they grow in holiness. Let them prove themselves to be the family of Christ, by “*holding fast the confidence and rejoicing of their hope steadfast to the end.* (Titus 1:9, Heb 3:14).” Let them hold forth the Word of life, the ground of their hope, in a meek and reverent confession of the truth and attest and adorn that confession by a “*conversation becoming the gospel* (Phil 1:27)” a holy, happy, useful life.

So, the question is, do you have a real and grounded hope for eternity as being on the narrow and strait way to heaven or are you on the highway to hell?

In 1979 the Australian band AC/DC released their title song and album “Highway to Hell.” It exploded onto the record charts. It became their commercial breakthrough in the U.S. and is still widely played today. The lyrics include: *Livin’ easy, lovin’ free, Askin’ nothin’ Leave me be, Goin’ down, party*



time, My friends are gonna be there too, I'm on the highway to hell. Hey Satan, payin' my dues, look at me I'm on the way to the promised land. Just 7 months after the release of Highway to Hell AC/DC's frontman Bon Scott suddenly died at the age of 33 from alcohol poisoning after a night of heavy drinking and carousing. The coroner classified his death as "death by misadventure." Yes, if you mock God, you might die by "misadventure." The lesson to learn is:

Don't Mock God.

Here are signs you are on the way to heaven (or hell).

1. DO YOU SOW TO THE SPIRIT OR TO THE FLESH?

*Gal. 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; **BUT HE THAT SOWETH TO THE SPIRIT SHALL OF THE SPIRIT REAP LIFE EVERLASTING.***

Bon Scott mocked and despised God in an open and notorious way. He might as well have said "I am drinking, doing drugs, partying, fornicating, and committing every sin imaginable and I have no regrets! I am living my life to the fullest and loving it. Look at me, I am on the highway to hell, and it is great! He sowed to the flesh and the next thing you know he is dead and reaping corruption. He was only 33 years old! Fear God, don't mock Him.

Gill: **He that Soweth to the Flesh:** ...one that pampers his flesh, gratifies and indulges the lusts of it, who minds the things of the flesh, lives after it, and does the works of it, who spends his substance in a luxurious way upon himself and family; or whose whole bent, and study, and employment, is to increase his worldly riches, to aggrandize himself and posterity... and shall fall into the pit of corruption, and be punished with everlasting destruction, and die the second death in the world to come.

Matthew Henry: Those who live a carnal sensual life, who, instead of employing themselves to the honor of God and the good of others, spend all their thoughts, and care, and time, about the flesh, must expect no other fruit of such a course than corruption — a mean and short-lived satisfaction at present, and ruin and misery at the end of it.

Gill: **He that Soweth to the Spirit;** not his own, but the Spirit of God; or that soweth spiritual things, that minds and savors the things of the Spirit, lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit; that lays out his worldly substance in promoting spiritual things, in encouraging the spiritual ministers of the Word, in supporting the interest of spiritual religion, in relieving the poor of Christ's churches, in contributing to the spread of the Gospel, and the administration of the Word and ordinances in other places, as well as where he is more immediately concerned. Tit. 2:12 *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*

Matthew Henry: But, on the other hand, those who sow to the Spirit, who under the guidance and influence of the Spirit do live a holy and spiritual life, a life of devotedness to God and of usefulness and serviceableness to others, may depend upon it that of the Spirit they shall reap life everlasting — they shall have the truest comfort in their present course, and an eternal life and happiness at the end of it.

Rom. 8:1 **THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT.** 2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* 3 *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:* 4 *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* 5 *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* 6 **FOR TO BE CARNALLY MINDED IS DEATH; BUT TO BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED IS LIFE AND PEACE.** 7 *Because the carnal mind is*

enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. This road does not appeal to the flesh. This road is abhorrent to the flesh. This road is designed to weed out the spiritually dead. This road is not a vacation, it is the hardest road that has ever existed, and it is littered with dead souls along the way.

Gal. 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

1 Pet. 3:1 *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands...3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, **EVEN THE ORNAMENT OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT, WHICH IS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OF GREAT PRICE.***

Rom 8:11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. **13 FOR IF YE LIVE AFTER THE FLESH, YE SHALL DIE: BUT IF YE THROUGH THE SPIRIT DO MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, YE SHALL LIVE. 14 FOR AS MANY AS ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD.***

1 John 2:15 **LOVE NOT THE WORLD, NEITHER THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD. IF ANY MAN LOVE THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM.** 16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: **BUT HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF GOD ABIDETH FOREVER.*** Mat 5:3 **BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT: FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.**

Even though men counted Saul as with the prophets when he prophesied (1 Sam 10:11, *Is Saul also among the prophets?*) and when he occasionally called on the name of the LORD, he was a man of the flesh and was rejected by God (1 Sam. 15:26) . David was a man of the Spirit and a man after God’s own heart – Acts 13:22. You are either one or the other, there is no middle ground. Which are you?

2. DO YOU SUFFER AND ENDURE SPIRITUAL PERSECUTION FOR CHRIST’S SAKE?

Phil 1:29 *For unto you it is **given** (no freewill) in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, **BUT ALSO TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE.***

Mat. 5:11 - **BLESSED ARE YE, WHEN MEN SHALL REVILE YOU, AND PERSECUTE YOU, AND SHALL SAY ALL MANNER OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY, FOR MY SAKE. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN:** *for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

Two precious gifts are given to us, one is to believe and one is to suffer. It is an honor to suffer for Christ’s sake. William Gurnall (*The Christian in Complete Armor*) says people can say what they want, but... **“the true cause of a Christian’s suffering are the words they preach for Christ.”** These verses are not talking about general suffering that humans endure but specifically related to the Elect’s words and behavior of and for Christ. **He says the real reason that people leave the work of Christ and fall away is because they get tired of the suffering.** He says the defenses we are given are to keep us from sin, not to keep us from suffering. When we suffer for Christ’s words and His sake, we become conformed to our Head. Christ suffered for His words and therefore we must suffer for His words. 1 Pet. 4:12-14 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:13 **But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s***

*sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*¹⁴ **If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.**

Beloved, you are in the land where your enemies abound. You know you are on the path to heaven when you are reviled and persecuted for Christ's sake and His words. Mat. 18:7 *Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come...* 2 Tim. 2:12 **IF WE SUFFER, WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM:** *if we deny him, he also will deny us.* 1 Pet 3:14 *But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye.*

Re 7:14 ... *And he (one of the Elders in heaven) said to me (regarding those in white robes), these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Billy Joel says – I'd rather laugh with the sinners, than cry with the saints (Only the Good Die Young).* Billy Joel is a man that lives after the flesh, not the spirit. Christ says: Mat. 5:4 *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.* Let's mourn for our sins now, and suffer now with all sobriety and understanding of our nature and indwelling sin and our unbelief that cause us continual grief of mind, and rejoice with God later. 2 Cor. 1:8 *For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.* 2 Cor. 4:8 **We are troubled on every side yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.**

When I started attending church over 45 years ago, I do not recall anyone disclosing the suffering would be required in this endeavor! But it all works together for our good and for the good of the church and the people of God, the Captain leading the children to glory. Believing is a gift from God but also is suffering. Tribulation is required. Suffering is not optional. This is a strait and narrow path and gate. It is not easy. There is a survival show on TV where people

have to survive for 21 days in the wilderness with no food or clothes. It doesn't matter how good their survival skills are – what it really comes down to is how



good are you are at suffering? How good are you at starving, enduring extreme cold or heat, etc. Many times, they will have these big brute men and these petite women paired together and it is the big men that tap out, while the frail woman stays because sometimes the woman can suffer better.

1 Pet. 3:16 *Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.*

John Brown, the Scottish preacher says: It is not enough that Christians, when they suffer, should suffer, not for doing ill, but for doing well; but further, that they should do well, and not do ill, in suffering. They should be good sufferers in a good cause. It is not mere suffering that is to do us good; it is the manner in which we think, and feel, and act under suffering. It is much better, when called to suffer, to suffer in the manner the apostle recommends, than in an opposite way. How much more comfortable, how much more advantageous to ourselves, how much more honorable to God, how much more creditable to religion, to bear the afflictions laid on us, especially those which come in the form of persecution, in a quiet, resigned, pious, cheerful, humble, patient, meek, spirit, than in a different, than in an opposite temper!

If you are looking for an easy path to heaven, it does not exist. Man cannot lower the standards of the God of The Universe. If you are looking to jump over the

wall and save yourself from suffering and take a short cut to heaven, you will find yourself to be a thief and will be cast out. Christ is the door. John 10:1 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ... Then said Jesus unto them ... I am the door of the sheep. Mat. 22:11 ... And when the KING came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the KING to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.*

Heb 12:5-8 *5 ... My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 **IF YE ENDURE CHASTENING, GOD DEALETH WITH YOU AS WITH SONS**; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ... 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: **NEVERTHELESS AFTERWARD IT YIELDETH THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO THEM WHICH ARE EXERCISED THEREBY**. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.* In the future, for anyone that desires to be baptized my first question will be: Do you understand that you must suffer greatly in this path you are taking? John Bunyan misrepresented the name of his book. It should be *A Pilgrim's Sufferings*, not *Pilgrim's Progress*. Pilgrim suffers from one end of the book to the other! That is a more accurate view of what happens to Christian and to God's Elect. Set the expectation in your mind that you are going to suffer. But in the whole scheme of things it is very, very short, so, maybe *Progress* is okay after all. 2Co 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

In Luke 18:5, the parable of the sower, the seed fell by the way side... **then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.** 13 *They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.* 14 *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*

Rom. 8: 17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; **IF SO BE THAT WE SUFFER WITH HIM, THAT WE MAY BE ALSO GLORIFIED TOGETHER.*** 18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Mat. 5:4 ***BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN: FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.***

Gill: By the "strait gate" is meant Christ himself; who elsewhere calls himself "the door." This is called "strait"; because faith in Christ, a profession of it, and a life and conversation agreeable to it, are attended with many afflictions, temptations, reproaches, and persecutions. "Entering" in at it is by faith, and making a profession of it...

So, are you suffering like Christ did for His words and what He said? Are you reviled, persecuted and evil spoken of for those words? It is to be considered.

Christ said we must receive our evil things now, and our good things later. Lu 16:25 ***But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*** We want to deny ourselves and lose our life now, that we gain it later. Mark 8:34 ***And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. 36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?***

I love you all, Amen.