

I AM THE DOOR



THE CHRISTIAN'S MYSTICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

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CHRIST IS THE DOOR



John 10:1-10 MKJV Truly, truly, I say to you, He who does not enter into the sheepfold by the door, but going up by another way, that one is a thief and a robber. (2) But he who enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) The doorkeeper opens to him, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (4) And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him. For they know his voice. (5) And they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. (6) Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they did not understand what it was which He spoke to them. (7) Then Jesus said to them again, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. (8) All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. (9) I am the door. If anyone enters in by Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. (10) The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I Am The Door...

The experience of many mystics down the ages is that Jesus the Messiah is the door to direct, personal experience of the holy and true God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Through His sacrifice on the cross Jesus wipes away the obstacle of our needing permission to enter the Presence of God, and through His Person and teachings He reveals the true path to God.

This book is about the simple, easy path to God that Jesus taught.

- The Jesus path is personal faith in Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.
- The Jesus path is disciplined and ethical and involves the personal change known as repentance.
- The Jesus path involves diligently seeking the Truth and living in the Light.
- The Jesus path is easy, available, simple, humble and non-hierarchical.
- The Jesus path is gentle, harmless, world-renouncing and non-materialistic.
- The Jesus path involves entering the spiritual realm known as the Kingdom of Heaven.
- The Jesus path involves the transcendent use of prayer and of spiritual authority.

Jesus is the door to acceptance with God and true knowledge of the love of God. This brings about a state known as abundant life or eternal life. Inside the door we find spiritual protection and belonging just as a sheep does inside the door of the sheepfold.

The Door is not an eight-fold path or an arduous spiritual ascent. It is simple as walking into the right room – a room filled with light.

Some people try all the wrong doors first – but this is not necessary. The door is open and available and tax-gatherers and prostitutes who saw the Door and went in arrived in the Kingdom ahead of the religious experts:

Matthew 21:28-32 MKJV But what do you think? A man had two sons; and he came to the first and said, Son, go work in my vineyard today. (29) He answered and said, I will not. But afterwards he repented and went. (30) And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and did not go. (31) Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, The first. Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you that the tax-collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. (32) For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the tax-collectors and the harlots believed him. And when you had seen it, you did not repent afterwards so that you might believe him.

Jesus is the Door because He is God incarnate (God in human flesh), or as St. Paul states “the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9) or as St John puts it:

John 1:14 MKJV And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth.

Jesus is the down-to-earth God who could be touched. Thus Jesus is our contact point with the Divine and the Door to the spiritual life of eternity.

God confirmed this by raising Jesus from the dead after He had been crucified. Thus Jesus has the role of a complete spiritual guide – someone who has come from Heaven, lived a life on earth, performed miracles, tasted death, gone down to Hades, been raised to life again and has then ascended back to Heaven (where He sits at the right hand of the Father).

No other spiritual person has completed this redemptive cycle and the tombs of the prophets and gurus attest to the fact that for them death was the end. Not so for Christ.

The Door opens into Heaven. As soon as we go through the Door we have passed out of death into life. We participate in the indestructible life of Christ.

John 5:24-26 MKJV Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life. (25) Truly, truly, I say to you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live. (26) For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has given to the Son to have life within Himself,

Hebrews 7:16 ISV who was appointed to be a priest, not on the basis of a regulation concerning his ancestry, but rather on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

Everlasting life... eternal life... the life of God within us.... This is what is on the other side of the Door that is Jesus Christ.

The Door is hidden but it is easy to open. On the Day of Pentecost three thousand rushed through it at once.

It can be entered instantly through faith. It is as simple as believing – and as difficult!

The doorway to Eternity is not found by climbing a social ladder or by standing atop a pile of possessions. Neither is it found at the top of an ecclesiastical pyramid. Tax-gatherers and sinners, prostitutes and soldiers with blood on their hands have all entered ahead of many clergy.

The doorway to Eternity is not a matter of scholarship. The unlearned and ignorant can enter in. The tribes of Papua New Guinea have entered ahead of the scholars of Europe.

If you discover the Door and enter in you are ahead of the rest of the world and of many of the ancient holy men of old.

Matthew 11:11-14 MKJV Truly I say to you, Among those who have been born of women there has not risen a greater one than John the Baptist. But the least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. (12) And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven is taken by violence, and the violent take it by force. (13) For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. (14) And if you will receive it, this is Elijah who is to come.

Jesus is telling us something very important here - anyone who enters through the Door is greater than John the Baptist - who is in turn greater than all the holy men and women of Old Testament times. Jesus also tells us that written religion – the Law and the Prophets, lasted up until John, but it has been replaced. Jesus has introduced something greater than written religion – the personal and direct experience of God in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus is the Door to Heaven, and to the personal direct experience of God through faith via the Holy Spirit. We will hear more about this later.

The Door is trusting a Person - not doing any particular spiritual exercise. The Door is not reading a book, or performing a liturgy or magic ceremony, nor does it involve taking a drug or singing a song. The Door is not a spell an artifact, a charm or a prophecy. Neither is the Door a course of study. It is a realization of Christ and of who He is and of your opportunity to love and trust him.

THE NARROW DOOR OF JESUS



Matthew 7:13-14 MKJV Go in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in through it. (14) Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Jesus is quite clear, only a minority will be saved, they will be “few who find it” and the way to salvation is narrow and constricted. While the Door opens to all who find it – it is found and entered by only a few.

Luke 13:23-30 MKJV And one said to Him, Lord, are the ones being saved few? And He said to them, (24) Strive to enter in at the narrow gate. For I say to you, many will seek to enter in and shall not be able. (25) And once the Master of the house has risen up and has shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, and He shall answer and say to you, I do not know you; from where are you; (26) then you shall begin to say, We ate and drank in Your presence, and You have taught in our streets. (27) But He shall say, I tell you, I do not know you; from where you are. Depart from Me, all workers of unrighteousness! (28) There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you will see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves being thrust out. (29) And they will come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and will recline in the kingdom of God. (30) And behold, there are last ones which will be first, and there are first ones which will be last.

Jesus is quite pessimistic – “many will seek to enter and will not be able”.

There will be a point when the Door is shut (as the next parable makes clear) and at that time there will be ‘weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth’. The Door is not entered by familiarity (*we ate in Your presence, and You taught in our streets*) but by faith and faith is no respecter of social rank: *And behold, there are last ones which will be first, and there are first ones which will be last.*

Matthew 25:1-13 MKJV Then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. (2) And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. (3) The foolish ones took their lamps, but took no oil with them. (4) But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (5) While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (6) And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes! Go out to meet him. (7) Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. (8) And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps have gone out. (9) But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there be not enough for us and you. But rather go to those who sell, and buy for yourselves. (10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. And they who were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. (11) Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. (12) But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you. (13) Therefore watch, for you do not know either the day or the hour in which the Son of Man comes.

Spiritual preparation should be made early in life, otherwise the lamp of the spirit goes out. It is foolish to put off spiritual preparation until just before you die, or until just before the Lord returns. You have to make yourself ready to receive God into your life and prepare for a life of intimacy with Him, just as a traditional bride prepared for the wedding. In the rest of this chapter we will look at what the New Testament says about entering the Door and touch on all the bible verses about entering Heaven and entering the Kingdom.

Heaven is exclusive – but not in the social sense or even in the moral sense. It is not race or class or education or even goodness that fit a person for Heaven but faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The prostitutes can enter, but few rich people do.

Matthew 19:23-24 MKJV Then Jesus said to His disciples, Truly I say to you that a rich man will with great difficulty enter into the kingdom of Heaven. (24) And again I say to you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Heaven can ONLY be entered through living faith in Jesus. You cannot get into Heaven on your own terms or in your own timing. You must submit to the will of God and accept His wisdom. The Pharisees constructed a strict set of man-made rules concerning righteousness, based on the Law of Moses but going much further than it. Of them Jesus says:

Matthew 5:20-22 MKJV For I say to you that unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven. (21) You have heard that it was said to the ancients, "You shall not kill" --and, "Whoever shall kill shall be liable to the judgment." (22) But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be liable to the judgment. And whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be liable to the Sanhedrin; but whoever shall say, Fool! shall be liable to be thrown into the fire of hell.

In other words external observance was not enough – the righteousness that enters the Kingdom has to be within, of the heart, and of the true peaceful and loving wisdom of God. And neither can you enter Heaven through a creed or a confession of faith:

Matthew 7:21 MKJV Not everyone who says to Me, Lord! Lord! shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven.

There has to be appropriate action, otherwise people could fool God and just say “Lord, Lord” and confess their “faith” without true repentance and without true moral reform. And moral reform is absolutely necessary for a place in the Kingdom of God. The truly repentant person shows that repentance in the actions of their lifestyle.

Repentance leads to a lifestyle that is innocent and harmless and good. This harmless lifestyle of love is the lifestyle of the Kingdom – where every hurtful word and thought and deed is put far away. This harmless lifestyle of faith is part of what Jesus means when He says:

Matthew 18:3-4 MKJV and said, Truly I say to you, Unless you are converted and become as little

children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. (4) Therefore whoever shall humble himself like this little child, this one is the greater in the kingdom of Heaven.

The Door is narrow because it requires diligent attention to our spiritual state to remove all that is sinful, harmful and noxious. The gate is “narrow and constricted” (or constrained) , you cannot take all your “baggage” through it – not so much mean emotional baggage as sinful tendencies. Jesus says quite clearly that we are to be firm on ourselves in this regard:

Mark 9:47 MKJV And if your eye offends you, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes to be cast into hell fire

Often the only way to a pure faith is through much suffering which is why St. Paul made suffering for Christ such a big part of his preaching:

Acts 14:22 MKJV confirming the souls of the disciples, calling on them to continue in the faith and that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.

There is one last requirement in the New Testament for entering through the Door and it is found in the gospel of St. John.

John 3:5-7 MKJV Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again.

We need a new nature for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 15:50). There has to be a spiritual rebirth, resulting in the formation of a “new person”. This is where most religious systems go badly wrong. They try to improve the exterior man through morality or through various spiritual disciplines. However as Jesus says so aptly “that which is born of the flesh is flesh”. These procedures may look wise but their foundation is just “flesh”, the spirit is left untouched and remains in darkness.

It is like the young man who spends two years in the Army and makes a bed you can bounce a coin off, and shines his shoes and marches in step and salutes crisply. He then leaves the service and goes to college and when you visit his room, the bed is unmade, the shoes are scuffed, and there is no sign that all that discipline had any effect whatsoever.

Ascetic disciplines are absent from the teachings of Jesus because He is moving in another dimension where they cannot reach – the dimension of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul puts it this way:

Colossians 2:18-23 CEV Don't be cheated by people who make a show of acting humble and who worship angels. They brag about seeing visions. But it is all nonsense, because their minds are filled with selfish desires. (19) They are no longer part of Christ, who is the head of the whole body. Christ gives the body its strength, and he uses its joints and muscles to hold it together, as it grows by the power of God. (20) You died with Christ. Now the forces of the universe don't have any power over you. Why do you live as if you had to obey such rules as, (21) "Don't handle this. Don't taste that. Don't touch this."? (22) After these things are used, they are no longer good for anything. So why be bothered with the rules that humans have made up? (23) Obeying these rules may seem to be the smart thing to do. They appear to make you love God more and to be very humble and to have control over your body. But they don't really have any power over our desires.

There needs to be the creation of a new inner person. The old outer person just won't ever make it spiritually. It can't - its just flesh, it decays, and its subject to the "powers of the Universe" described above.

The only way out is up – into the spiritual realm through being "born again" of the Spirit.

This is much more than just having a spiritual experience; it is a remaking of the inner person into the image of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 MKJV (17) So that if any one is in Christ, that one is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Colossians 3:9-11 MKJV Do not lie to one another, having put off the old man with his deeds (10) and having put on the new, having been renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, (11) where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave or freeman, but Christ is all things in all.

Thus entering the Door is not easy – it requires a new harmless, unworldly nature of child-like simplicity and truth, which engages in a rigorous pruning of all that is harmful, sinful or prideful and which delights to do the will of God.

Many turn aside at this. They prefer their sophistication and their wealth or they balk at the idea of change. It is very hard for the "rich" to enter the Kingdom of God.

Now I am not saying that "works" are necessary for salvation, salvation is a free gift and requires no religious works whatsoever. Salvation is free, but it is not cheap. It is the pearl of great price, and a narrow door, and we must strive to enter in. We must accept the constraints of the new nature – which is not worldly or proud or vain or lustful. We must desire its Child-like qualities and let it be born within us. For the Child is Christ within us.

Many stare at the Narrow Gate and pause saying things such as "Can I take my worldly lifestyle into the Kingdom?" or "Surely this sin is not too bad." They make many excuses, they are busy, they have things to attend to, they are sleepy.

Some however desire the Land Beyond with such fire and intensity that they sell all and swing the gate wide open and enter in.

The key to the Narrow Gate is the faith that begets desire, faith that is certain of the Great Good that is to come and trusts in Jesus the Christ. If you do not desire the Kingdom more than all the riches and sins and pleasures of this world you will stand outside the Door forever.

Matthew 7:13-14 MKJV Go in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in through it. (14) Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.