

God chose Moses to lead His people from bondage in the land of Egypt to the Promised Land. This land was described to them as a beautiful and bountiful land, flowing with milk and honey<sup>1</sup>. Though Moses was not allowed to physically enter that land<sup>2</sup>, he was actually the first (and perhaps only one) to be able to view it in its full scope<sup>3</sup>. I think of the perspective that he was given here of the condition and breadth of the land (and of the future for his people<sup>4</sup>).

Jesus had an even wider view of the world (and all of its kingdoms)<sup>5</sup> than Moses had, when Satan took him up on a mountain to tempt Him. As the Son of God, He actually has an even larger perspective of the entire universe.

We too share in a small part this view of a very extensive landscape of awesome beauty, for as we look at the heavens, we should clearly be able to see and declare the glory of God<sup>6</sup>. This seems so obvious to me, but many cannot see it. As the Psalmist wrote, “the fool says in his heart there is no God<sup>7</sup>.” The prophet Isaiah claimed that even what we consider to be “dumb” animals understand about their master, but so many do not understand about God their Creator<sup>8</sup>.

God at first sought to draw people to Him by the magnificence of the creation and the protection of His chosen people. But God was leading us to a higher level of response – that of love, and He communicated that to us with His greatest commandments<sup>9</sup>.

We too often are distracted or misled by the efforts of an adversary<sup>10</sup> to cause us to miss the point that God is making. Jesus described this as getting us to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel<sup>11</sup>. The image corresponds to different sizes of netting – wide and narrow. In a similar way, Jesus described the entrance into the Kingdom using the words “wide” and “narrow”. We must enter through the narrow gate or door<sup>12</sup>. Jesus talked of many different items that we needed in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven<sup>13</sup>; in a sense we have to carry them through the door with us. These things were not associated with being worthy or deserving acceptance<sup>14</sup>, but of being accounted in that way<sup>15</sup>. I think of Jesus as coming through from the other side to lead us through; He spoke of Himself as being the Great Shepherd and also the gate<sup>16</sup> to pen and pasture. As He is the Son of God, then you must see that this is spiritually a very large door. And so it is large enough for all of us to enter, if we truly followed Him.

Remember that there was another gate that Jesus went through for us. He suffered outside the city gate to make us holy through His own blood<sup>17</sup>. In passing through that gate he entered the realm of the dead, but it could not hold Him. And He passed back through the gate by conquering death and thus providing us the resurrection of life<sup>18</sup>.

I believe that the gate is wide – but in our limited, selfish perception, we see it as the eye of the needle<sup>19</sup>. If we see it at all, that is, for we all have a certain blindness that is difficult to overcome. Jesus spoke fiercely about it to those who refused to see that He was from God<sup>20</sup>. That is why He said “few they are that find it<sup>21</sup>.” We must open our hearts, eyes, and ears; we must remove our veil<sup>22</sup> to see God. We must not miss the point<sup>23</sup>.

One of the greatest parables of the Teacher was that of the sower and the seed. The real message, as Jesus had to explain, is about seeing and understanding. It was about “getting” the point of God’s Goodness and opening our eyes to His Word<sup>24</sup>. Most people see and hear but do not understand – mostly because they do not want to change.

But Christ came to open our eyes and turn us from darkness to light, to turn us from the power of Satan to the power of God so that we can be forgiven and saved<sup>25</sup>. And the Holy Spirit has been sent to us to keep our eyes open and focused on the Truth<sup>26</sup>.

We remember that there were two criminals that hung on crosses beside our Lord. Both had done wrong and had not understood the Way of God. But in his brief time in pain on his cross, one of them suddenly perceived the love of God in the person of the man in between them. He came to understand the broad perspective that earned him a promise of Paradise<sup>27</sup> from Christ. The other criminal kept his narrow perspective and died cursing what he could not understand<sup>28</sup>. Jesus is indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life<sup>29</sup>. His perspective was as broad as the universe, and yet also so focused as to love and forgive each individual of us<sup>30</sup>.

The Way is wide open for us to see the glory of God, but our narrow minds can keep us from understanding. God works to open our eyes beyond the inconceivably huge heavens and earth to see also the incomprehensible depth of His love<sup>31</sup> in sacrificing His unique Son to save us. Once we see it, He expects us to act in obedience to build up the Kingdom and our relationship with Him<sup>32</sup>.

1. Ezekiel 20:6
2. though, of course, he joined Jesus at the Transfiguration; Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13, and Luke 9:28-36
3. Numbers 27:12
4. Exodus 4:18; the words “Let my people go” were always the language of God through Moses
5. Matthew 4:8
6. Psalms 19:1-2
7. Psalms 14:1, 53:1
8. Isaiah 1:3
9. Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-34, from Deuteronomy 6:5-6
10. 1 Peter 5:8
11. Matthew 23:24
12. see Matthew 7:13-14 (following Him in the sense of physical space) and Luke 13:23-31 (adding the dimension of time and relationship)]
13. Consider all of what Jesus was saying about entering:
  - a) our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law (Matthew 5:20); tax collectors and prostitutes are considered in this category because they are not “fake”, but genuine (they “get” it) (Matthew 21:31); the experts in the law actually hindered those who are entering (taking away the key to knowledge) from outside the gate (attempting to put veils over our eyes to keep us from seeing the big picture) (Matthew 23:13 and Luke 11:52); also consider 1 Corinthians 1 about weakness; not obvious to those who worship their own power (they can’t “see” it)
  - b) have a relationship deeper than just calling Jesus “Lord”, Matthew 7:21; also Matthew 25:10-11 and Luke 13:22, 24-25 (so God will answer that he knows us and where we come from)
  - c) keep the commandments, Matthew 19:17 (which are not grievous)
  - d) not worship riches, Matthew 19:23-24, Mark 10:23-25, and Luke 18:24-25 (eye of the needle – narrow)

- e) eliminate the things that keep us from following Good (God), Mark 9:43,45,47; (cut off your hand, foot, or eye)
  - f) have the humble perspective of a child (and perhaps the wonder), Mark 10:15 and Luke 18:17
  - g) they must be “born again” (a concept similar to the narrow door), John 3:4-5 (born of water and the spirit)
  - h) they must pass through the gate of the Good Shepherd, John 10:1-2, 9 (and find good pasture); Jesus became the gate, entering the world, accomplishing His mission, and going back to the Father (not distorting the path as those that don’t see do)
  - i) We must ask, seek, and knock, Matthew 7:7-8 and Luke 11:9-10 (to open the door)
14. Philippians 3:9; Titus 3:4-5
  15. Romans 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 22, 24; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23
  16. John 10:7-9
  17. Hebrews 13:12
  18. Acts 2:29-33
  19. Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25, and Luke 18:25
  20. Matthew 23:13 and 16 - blind guides! 17 - blind fools! 19 - blind men! 24 - blind guides! 26 - Blind Pharisee!
  21. Matthew 7 :14
  22. 2 Corinthians 3:13-16
  23. What good is the most thrilling romance of a life, yea, what good will it do if my life has been successful in secondary things and men head carloads of wreaths upon my coffin, if a higher hand writes upon the margin of my life: 'you missed the theme; you did not get the point'. Helmut Thielicke
  24. Numbers 24:4 and 16; Psalms 119:18 and 148
  25. Isaiah 42:7
  26. John 14:6
  27. Luke 23:39-44
  28. Luke 23:39
  29. John 14:6
  30. Luke 23:34
  31. Ephesians 2:6-7
  32. John 4:35