Narrow is the Gate
—Matthew 7:13-14

The parable of the two gates pictures the people of Earth walking on two roads. One road is broad and many walk that way. The other road is narrow and few find the gate to it. These two roads don't lead to the same place (Matthew 7:13-14).

We are fond of dividing the world into two. We speak of the rich and the poor, but there are many people who are neither rich nor poor. We speak of the bosses and the workers, but many people are neither, and some are both. We speak of the educated and uneducated, but some people have education yet lack wisdom, whilst some uneducated people are very wise.

This just shows that dividing the world in two, or even three, is usually presumptuous, simplistic, inaccurate, and perhaps even alienating. But does this apply to all cases? In particular, is the world divided into the saved and the unsaved — those in God’s way and those following Satan? Many folk would call that a presumptuous, simplistic, inaccurate, and alienating view of the world.

1 Only Two Ways

Jesus Christ, however, divides humanity in just that manner: people are travelling either the broad road to destruction or the narrow road to life — just two groups and no exceptions (Matthew 7:13-14).

Later in that chapter, he again divides people into two groups: the wise who hear and do his words (Matthew 7:24), and the foolish who don't (Matthew 7:26).

On a later occasion, Jesus spoke of how he will, at the last judgment, separate the people of all nations into two "as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32-33). The “sheep” at his right hand will inherit the kingdom prepared for them (Matthew 25:34). The “goats” at his left hand will be sent into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). When these two groups have gone their way, nobody else shall remain (Matthew 25:46).

So when Jesus pictures the two gates, or two builders, or the sheep separated from the goats, he has included all human beings. Each of us is on one of those groups. Or to point the finger, you are in one of those groups. Which one?

2 The Way of the Many

Not only has Jesus divided the world in two, but appallingly, he has numbered those who are on the road to destruction as “many” and those on the road to life as only a “few” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Why are there “many” going in at the wrong gate and walking on the wrong road? Jesus gives no reason for the number. He doesn't even indicate that the number cannot be changed. He leaves it open that the majority could walk the way to life, and only a few walk the way to destruction, or for that matter everyone could walk the way to
life leaving the road to destruction deserted. When Jesus says, "enter by the narrow
gate" (Matthew 7:13), presumably anyone who listens to him say that, can do that.
Why would Jesus tell everybody to enter by the narrow gate, and walk the narrow
way, if most of them can't do that?

You might say, “Jesus does give the reason why many go down the broad way. The
word translated narrow means difficult. It's the nature of human beings to choose
what's easy, not what's hard.” Well, I don't think so. People do all kinds of things that
are difficult because they think those things are right, or they enjoy the challenge, or
they deem the reward as well worth the effort. Surely the Christian life is a worthy
challenge, and brings a wonderful reward, such that you would expect many more
people to choose it than do.

Choosing Destiny

Anyway, there is nothing compelling people to follow the broad way to destruction,
even though most people do. Destiny doesn't force people to follow one of the two
roads. They choose the gate they enter; they choose the road they walk; hence they
choose their destiny. There is nothing preventing people from following the right way
to life, even though few do.

The Way of the Few

Although Jesus speaks of two roads, only one of them is of his making. Jesus never
desired that there be a road to destruction, and he never caused anyone to follow it.
The broad road represents a way of living designed by Satan. Jesus provides an
alternative way, represented by the narrow road. When Jesus says, "enter by the
narrow gate" (Matthew 7:13), he refers to the gospel way of living. In early times,
Christianity was actually called "the Way" (Acts 19:9,23).

In fact, Jesus called himself the way: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one
comes to the Father except by me" (John 14:6).

Seeking the Way

When Jesus mentioned the narrow gate and the difficult path beyond it, he said, "And
few there be who find it" (Matthew 7:14). There are two ways you can find
something. One is to stumble upon it by some fortunate circumstance; the other is to
seek it by making an intelligent and systematic search. Jesus tells us which way to
find the gate to the true way: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7 NASB).

Total Commitment

We can gather from this that walking the narrow way means making an absolute and
total commitment to Jesus Christ. It means loving him, obeying him, depending on
him, worshipping him, giving ourselves to him, being his slaves. And where do we
start? Jesus tells us clearly what to do to begin this journey, as follows...

1. Hear Christ’s word (Matthew 7:24-25).
2. Believe in Him (John 3:16)
4. Confess Him (Matthew 10:32)
5. Be baptized (Mark 16:15-16)