

FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT

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Statistics show that a solid majority of people believe they are going to heaven. Around one third of Americans do not believe that hell exists, and about 80% of students in denominational preaching schools do not believe there is a hell. Those who actually believe that there is a hell tend to believe that it will have a sparse population in eternity. The teachings of Jesus Christ strongly contradict this wisdom of men. In Matthew 7:13-14, the Lord said, "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 which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few there be that find it.*" Our faith needs to be based in what God has spoken, not in what people (and preachers) think or say (Rom 10:17; 1 Cor 2:4-5).

Those who strive without faith

In Luke 13:23, Christ was asked the question, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" He answered in the affirmative, teaching us to "strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). How is it possible that many would seek to enter into salvation but be unable to do so? Luke 11:9 says, "Seek, and ye shall find." But this promise is only for those who seek God *properly*. Right after he warned that many would seek and not be able to obtain salvation, the Lord said, "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last" (Luke 13:25-30). This is clearly a reference to the Jews who rejected Christ in contrast to the Gentiles who received him. They will be thrust out of the kingdom because of their unbelief. Romans 9:31-32 says that "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it not by faith*, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone." These Jews were seeking improperly. They were seeking by the Old

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Testament law, and not by faith. Thus, when Jesus came, they stumbled in their unbelief.

Those who strive unlawfully

Second Timothy 2:5 emphasizes the necessity of striving in the right way, saying, "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, *except he strive lawfully.*" Those who seek to enter in but are not able are not striving lawfully. The world contains many religious people, but how many people are humbling themselves before God to obey Him? Cain made up his own way of worshiping God, offering the fruit of the ground instead of the firstlings of the flock (Gen 4:3-5). God received Abel's offering because it was *by faith* (Heb 11:4), which means it was according to what God had commanded (Rom 10:17). God rejected Cain's offering because it was *evil* (1 John 3:12), which means he *transgressed God's law* (1 John 3:4). Nadab and Abihu offered *strange fire* to God *which he commanded them not* and paid with their lives (Lev 10:1-2). When the priests in David's time carried the ark of the covenant on an oxcart instead of on their shoulders with staves like God said, tragedy befell them (1 Chr 13:7-14). Only when they did it God's way, "*after the due order,*" were they blessed by God (1 Chr 15:11-26). We cannot make up the rules. It is not up to us to decide how we will seek our Creator (Jer 10:23). Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt 7:21-23). Many people *claim* that what they are doing is for Jesus, when in fact they are committing sin because they do not have his authority for what they are doing. *Saying* that we have the Lord's authority is not the same as actually having it. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Only the few who are seeking sincerely, and lawfully, by faith, will find the strait and narrow road that leads to eternal life (Matt 7:13-14) and sit down in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:29-30). Those who are not seeking in the proper way will find the door unopened to them and they will be thrust out. May we be among the few who truly find it by being among the few who truly obey the Lord (Heb 5:9).