

Lesson - Galveston – 8-6-2023

Good Morning Brothers and Sisters

Welcome visitors

It is always a blessing to encourage each other every time we gather in the name of Jesus.

This morning I am continuing my focus on ways to help and encourage disciples of Jesus to make more disciples by reaching out to those outside the church building.

One way to gently and respectfully reach out to those who do not have a clear idea of what the Bible says is to carefully choose the words we use and the way we respond in the presence of others.

There are so many misconceptions and Satan inspired beliefs about what is documented in the Word of God.

Today, we are going to investigate the process of entering Heaven based on the words of Jesus as inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

## Heaven is a gated community

Society, in general, visualizes Heaven as a cloud paradise that is managed by St. Peter who stands by the pearly gates and authorizes admittance of all but the most-evil souls.

A brother in Austin said he stopped reading the obituaries because everyone was going to heaven.

The thought that everyone is going to heaven is comforting to those that have not searched the scriptures to determine the accuracy of this illusion.

In reality, the delusion of easy access to Heaven via St. Peter's good graces is actually a delusion that can lead to Hell for the souls that do not follow the narrow road as defined by Jesus commands to the apostles. Matthew 7:13-14

It is indeed true that the truth will set you free, but first each soul has to be exposed to the truth about heaven.

How are those outside the church going to have an opportunity to enter Heaven?

BDOJs know the directions to Heaven:

How can souls follow the directions to Heaven unless they hear them and how can they hear the directions to Heaven unless His disciples proclaim the words of Jesus to His apostles.

Romans 10:13-15

<sup>13</sup> for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

<sup>14</sup> How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? <sup>15</sup> And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

That is our task ; Go into all the world and make disciples,  
Mathew 28:18-20

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Today, we are going to search the scriptures to investigate the St. Peter – Pearly Gates view of the access to Heaven.

The only references to Heaven’s pearly gates I found were in the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of the book of Revelation.

Revelation 21:12 – Holy City – Jerusalem coming down from Heaven

**<sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Revelation 21:21

**The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.**

Revelation 21:25

**<sup>25</sup> On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup> Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life**

Evidently walls work, especially if they are guarded by angels as in the Garden of Eden, and a gate keeper is indicated.

So, we know several things about the gates of Heaven:

1. There are gates, indicating there are walls
2. The gates are covered with pearl
3. The Gates are always open

But are two things that remain to be determined:

1. Who is the gate keeper of Heaven?
2. How is a soul allowed to enter Heaven?

Is Peter the gate keeper of Heaven?

Matthew 16:15-20

**15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”**

**16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”**

**17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades<sup>1</sup> will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be<sup>1</sup> bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be<sup>1</sup> loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.**

This is the passage commonly assumed to put Peter in charge of the physical gates to Heaven.

But, review of more of the Word indicates that Peter’s statement “Jesus is the Messiah” is the foundation “Rock” of the church that belongs to Jesus.

The Biblical text indicates Jesus was speaking to a number of apostles and telling them that their decisions, guided by the Holy Spirit, would determine how the church would be ministered on the earth.

Furthermore, Peter did not act like he was the supreme leader as evidenced by his other actions with the apostles.

However, Peter did open the gates to Heaven to all souls on the day of Pentecost with the help of the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter 2.

It is more important to determine who is the real gate keeper of heaven than to argue about the authority of Peter.

Jesus spent a lot of time explaining to the disciples and apostles his responsibility for sheep.

**John 10:11**

**“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

John 10:1-3

**10 “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.**

John 10:7

**<sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. <sup>7</sup> Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for**

**the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them.**

This follows the shepherd tradition that the shepherd sleeps in the gate to the sheep pen so that there is no way the sheep can leave the sheep pen or predators can get into the sheep pen without going through the shepherd.

The 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John tells disciples how to get to the father in Heaven.

John 14:1-20

**14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.”<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”**

How do we know that obeying the words of Jesus to the apostles is the way to Heaven?

John 14:24

**Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.**

Jesus' words will be the standard on judgment day:

John 12:48.

**There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day.**

**In fact, Jesus continually adds those being saved to Heaven**

Acts 2:47

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

<sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

<sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. **And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**

Summary:

- The gates to Heaven in John's vision are made of pearl.
- Peter was prominent in opening the gates of heaven on Pentecost – but is not the gate keeper of Heaven
- Jesus is the gate keeper of Heaven
  - Jesus knows each soul



- Baptism puts a soul on the narrow road to heaven with a ticket for entry
- Entry to Heaven is validated by doing our best to obey everything Jesus commanded the apostles
- Disciples task are to give souls the directions to heaven.

BDOJs know the way to enter heaven.

1. Decide to become a disciple of Jesus, Being baptized in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins so that your sin cleansed soul can be in the presence of the pure and perfect, Almighty God.
  
2. Do your best to obey everything Jesus commanded the Apostles, being secure in the continuing grace, mercy, and forgiveness found in the blood of Jesus

It is never too late to start your journey on the narrow road to heaven

Any soul can start on the narrow road to Heaven by following Jesus directions.

That is why this congregation offers encouragement every time we gather in the name of Jesus to be baptized and have your sins forgiven to begin your journey on the narrow road.

Now is that time – this is your opportunity to come forward as we stand and sing a song of encouragement.