



## got life?

### The Gospel of John A Bible Study with Stan Key

#### FINDING THE DOOR

(John 10:7–10)

##### I. Looking for the Door

- A. It seems that humans have always recognized the \_\_\_\_\_ of doors. We find doors used in various religions, in dreams, in architecture, and especially in \_\_\_\_\_. The metaphorical power of this simple symbol is seen when we think about how a door:
1. Gives a \_\_\_\_\_ of what is on the other side.
  2. Provides a \_\_\_\_\_ from here to there. It enables you to walk through a wall!
  3. May be open or closed; inclusive or exclusive; \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. Indicates that something is either about to \_\_\_\_\_ or to \_\_\_\_\_.
  5. Is typically quite \_\_\_\_\_ and small.
  6. Confronts us with an opportunity; a \_\_\_\_\_.
  7. Preaches a \_\_\_\_\_ every time we pass through one.
- B. Consider, for example, how doors are used in:
1. Shintoism (religion of Japan). The archway is perhaps the primary symbol.
  2. The Roman god Janus was the god of doors (beginnings, endings, transitions, etc.). He is usually depicted as having two faces.
  3. The story of “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves” tells how a poor woodcutter (Ali Baba) discovers a cave full of treasure which is sealed so that the door can only be opened by speaking the magic words “Open Sesame.”
  4. An early scene in *Les Misérables* (Victor Hugo) tells how Jean Valjean, just released from 19 years in prison, comes to a village and knocks on many doors looking for shelter and hope. Every door is slammed in his face. In despair, he slumps on a park bench. A woman comes to him and, hearing his story, says, “Have you knocked at that door, there?... Knock there” (11).
  5. In the Disney movie *Frozen*, Anna says to Hans: “All my life has been a series of doors in my face and then suddenly I bump into you.” Then she sings, “Love Is an Open Door.”
  6. In the movie *Titanic*, Rose is saved by finding a floating door that is just big enough to save her alone. As Jack sinks in death, he makes her promise that she will live a long life and never give up.
  7. *The Chronicles of Narnia* are full of doors. The wardrobe is a passageway that leads from England to another world. Perhaps the most powerful portrayal is in *Prince Caspian* when Aslan builds a doorway in a field that appears to lead nowhere. But those who stepped through this door immediately entered another world. In his essay “The Weight of Glory,” C. S. Lewis explains his love for the symbolism of doors.

*Apparently, then, our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door, which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation... At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door... But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumor that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in.” (Weight of Glory, 36–37)*

## II. The Door: A Biblical History

Nowhere is the imagery of doors more powerful than in the Bible! From the first page to the last, the inspired writers talk about “the door.” Our study will end in John 10:7–10 with Jesus saying, “I am the door.” But to capture the dramatic impact, we must first explore the biblical history of the door.

### A. The door (gate, entrance) to the \_\_\_\_\_. Genesis 3:24.

In the beginning there was no \_\_\_\_\_ and thus, no door. God’s world and man’s world were one and the same (Paradise). Adam and Eve had fellowship with God. But sin created separation and they were expelled from Eden. An angel (cherubim) with a flaming sword was placed at the eastern entrance, making it impossible for Adam and Eve to enter their original home ever again. The \_\_\_\_\_!

Point to Ponder: Picture a wall that separates humans from God and our true homeland. Human history is thus lived east of Eden, in the land of Nod (wandering) (Gn 4:16). We are \_\_\_\_\_ but can’t get home because even if we could find the door, the entrance is guarded by angels who are armed and dangerous!

### B. The door in \_\_\_\_\_. Genesis 6:16; 7:16.

God gave Noah specific instructions about the door and when the rains began, he himself shut the door; thus all on the inside were \_\_\_\_\_ (safe, secure, full of hope) and all on the outside were \_\_\_\_\_ (doomed, lost, full of despair).

Point to Ponder: God’s \_\_\_\_\_ provision for salvation from judgment and the wrath to come was the ark. There was only one door and God determined when it would be shut. The same door that saves is the door that condemns. God’s part in salvation is to provide the ark and open the door. Man’s part is to enter in. “One door and only one, and yet its sides are two / Inside and outside, on which side are you?”<sup>1</sup>

### C. The door at the \_\_\_\_\_ (Heaven’s Gate). Genesis 11:1–9.

The multinational effort to build a tower “with its top in the heavens” (Gn 11:4) was an impressive effort to reach \_\_\_\_\_. The Akkadian name *bab-ilu*, meant “gate of god.” However, God was displeased with such arrogance and confused their speech and ended the futile project.

Point to Ponder: The story of the tower of Babel is meant to be an unforgettable object lesson showing the \_\_\_\_\_ of all human efforts to find the doorway that enables us to live in fellowship with God. Those who are brazen enough

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<sup>1</sup> A sobering representation of this door is found at The Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky. Visitors get a graphic feel for what it must have meant to be inside the door—and outside!

to claim to be able to reach heaven's gate by their own noble efforts will invite divine \_\_\_\_\_ and the work will end in \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>2</sup>

D. The door at the top of \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 28:10–17)

Jacob's ladder (stairway) succeeded where Babel's tower failed. This stairway was not built by man but \_\_\_\_\_ and "the top of it reached to heaven" (Gn 28:12). The angels going back and forth illustrated the mind-boggling possibility of being able to communicate with God! Jacob exclaimed: "This is the \_\_\_\_\_" (Gn 28:17).

Point to Ponder: Apparently, this stairway to God had always been there but Jacob, in his \_\_\_\_\_ had not seen it: "The Lord is in this place and I did not know it" (Gn 28:16). Note especially how Jesus uses the story of Jacob's ladder to explain to Nathanael both who he is and why he came: "You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending \_\_\_\_\_" (Jn 1:51). In other words, Jesus is the ladder, he is the door between heaven and earth, between God and man.

E. The door of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Exodus 25–40)

The Tabernacle was designed by God to \_\_\_\_\_ how his redeemed people could live in daily fellowship with him. There were actually three entrances (gates, doors, curtains) that led progressively closer and closer to the presence of God.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ into the courtyard (Ex 27:16; 38:18–19). On the eastern side of the fence that surrounded the Tabernacle was a single gate. It was made "of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework."
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ into the Tabernacle (Ex 26:36–37; 36:37–38). The entrance to the Holy Place included five pillars. This was also made "of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework".
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ that designated the Most Holy Place (Ex 26:31–35; 36:35–36). The massive curtain was also made "of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen" but it had an additional feature: "It shall be made with \_\_\_\_\_ skillfully worked into it"<sup>3</sup>. Behind this veil was placed the Ark of the Covenant (where the presence of God resided).

Point to Ponder: When Jesus died on the cross, the veil was torn in two, "from \_\_\_\_\_" (Mt 27:50–52). Theologically, this meant that believers now can come boldly into the very throne room of God (Heb 4:14–16).

*Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a \_\_\_\_\_ opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19–22)*

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<sup>2</sup> A tragic illustration is the California cult named "Heaven's Gate" founded by Marshall Applewhite. On March 26, 1997, 39 members of this cult participated in a mass suicide in hopes that they might reach an extraterrestrial spaceship that was supposedly passing by in conjunction with the Hale-Bopp comet.

<sup>3</sup> This was certainly a reference to the cherubim who guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden and the tree of life (Gn 3:24).

- F. The door to \_\_\_\_\_ (Ezekiel 40–47; especially 43:4–5; 44:1–3; 47:1–12)

After Solomon’s Temple was destroyed, the Lord gave Ezekiel a vision of what the new Temple would look like. The eastern door would remain \_\_\_\_\_ because the glory of the Lord had returned! A life-giving, healing river that flows in increasing strength is flowing out from \_\_\_\_\_ of the temple toward the Dead Sea. “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God” (Ps 46:4; see also Joel 3:18; Zech 14:8; Rv 22:1–2).

Point to Ponder: This passage connects the \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_! Jesus was very conscious of this connection. Notice how the water that flows under the door increases both in depth and breadth as it flows, though it has no tributaries! Notice how this water both heals and gives life.

- G. The Door in \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 4:1–2; 19:11; 21:1–3).

John’s vision of the end of human history includes several doors. He sees a “door standing open in heaven” (Rv 4:1–2). Looking inside, he sees a \_\_\_\_\_ going on of cosmic proportions. When Christ returns in power and glory, he will come through that open door (Rv 19:11) and then “the kingdom of the world [will] become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rv 11:15). As the new Jerusalem descends like a bride adorned for her wedding day, we realize that the wall of separation has \_\_\_\_\_ and creation and the redeemed are once again united in fellowship with God; a sort of reestablishment of the Garden of Eden. Once again, men and women have access to the \_\_\_\_\_.

Point to Ponder: When Christ returns to establish his kingdom on earth, there will be no need for a door because the redeemed are all \_\_\_\_\_ with him in intimate fellowship forever. The only “door” that remains is the one that leads to \_\_\_\_\_ (see Rv 1:18; 9:1–320:1–15. The redeemed are “shut in” with God. The lost are on the other side, “shut out” forever.

- H. \_\_\_\_\_ is the door (John 10:7–10)

Jesus not only *shows* the door, he \_\_\_\_\_ the door! Just as a shepherd lays down to sleep across the entryway of the sheepfold to protect the sheep from thieves and from predators, so Jesus is himself the doorway. He is Jacob’s ladder (Jn 1:51). He is *the way*, the \_\_\_\_\_ way, and no one comes to the Father except through him (Jn 14:6).

Point to Ponder: Though the way may seem narrow and hard (see Mt 7:13–14), this is the door that leads to \_\_\_\_\_ living (Jn 10:10).

### III. Conclusion

- A. There is \_\_\_\_\_. There really, truly is a point of access between this world and the Kingdom of God; between me and God. Though the wall of separation is broad and high, there is a door that enables one to connect with the other side.
- B. The door is \_\_\_\_\_. Today is a day of grace and the invitation is given: come inside!
- C. There is \_\_\_\_\_ door and it is \_\_\_\_\_ and hard (Jn 14:6; Mt 7:13–14). The “hardness” does not relate to human effort or meritorious good works. No! It is hard because it is hard to accept (see Jn 6:60). The narrow door means I can’t take any baggage or possessions along with me and I must be \_\_\_\_\_ to get it.

- D. The door will one day be \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus told two parables that emphasized the tragedy of coming to the door when it was already shut (Mt 25:1–13; Lk 13:22–30) The decision is urgent. Today is the day, now is the time. What could be more \_\_\_\_\_ and tragic than coming to the door and finding it locked?
- E. Jesus is the door. To \_\_\_\_\_ him and to \_\_\_\_\_ in his name is what it means to walk through the door (Jn 1:12–13).
- F. The great privilege of \_\_\_\_\_ is to stand by the door. When Jesus gave Peter (and the church) the \_\_\_\_\_ to the kingdom (Mt 16:19), he was commissioning his followers to tell others where the door is! Sam Shoemaker (1893–1963), one of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, wrote a poem that captures the true spirit of witnessing: “I Stand by the Door.”

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think the imagery of “the door” is such a popular theme in literature and the arts?
2. Which of the doors in our survey of biblical history spoke most deeply to you? Why?
3. Jesus not only shows us the door, he *is* the door! Explain the distinction.
4. Why is it so “hard” to accept that there is only one door and few people find it? Is there any way to soften this reality?
5. How did the poem by Sam Shoemaker impact you? What would it mean for you to understand your role as a witness as someone who stands by the door?

## Come to the Ark

By Anonymous (1846)

(Sung to the tune of “O God, Our Help in Ages Past)

*Come to the ark, come to the ark,  
To Jesus come away:  
The pestilence walks forth by night,  
The arrow flies by day.*

*Come to the ark: the waters rise,  
The seas their billows rear;  
While darkness gathers o'er the skies,  
Behold a refuge near.*

*Come to the ark, all, all that weep  
Beneath the sense of sin:  
Without, deep calleth unto deep;  
But all is peace within.*

*Come to the ark, ere yet the flood  
Your lingering steps oppose:  
Come, for the door which open stood  
Is now about to close.*

## **I Stand by the Door** By Sam Shoemaker (193–1963)

*I stand by the door.  
I neither go to far in, nor stay to far out.  
The door is the most important door in the  
world—  
It is the door through which men walk when  
they find God.  
There is no use my going way inside and  
staying there,  
When so many are still outside and they, as  
much as I,  
Crave to know where the door is.  
And all that so many ever find  
Is only the wall where the door ought to be.  
They creep along the wall like blind men,  
With outstretched, groping hands,  
Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a  
door,  
Yet they never find it.  
So I stand by the door.*

*The most tremendous thing in the world  
Is for men to find that door—the door to God.  
The most important thing that any man can do  
Is to take hold of one of those blind, groping  
hands  
And put it on the latch—the latch that only clicks  
And opens to the man's own touch.*

*Men die outside the door, as starving beggars  
die  
On cold nights in cruel cities in the dead of  
winter.  
Die for want of what is within their grasp.  
They live on the other side of it—live because  
they have not found it.  
Nothing else matters compared to helping them  
find it,  
And open it, and walk in, and find Him.  
So I stand by the door.*

*Go in great saints; go all the way in—  
Go way down into the cavernous cellars,  
And way up into the spacious attics.  
It is a vast, roomy house, this house where God  
is.  
Go into the deepest of hidden casements,  
Of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood.  
Some must inhabit those inner rooms  
And know the depths and heights of God,  
And call outside to the rest of us how wonderful  
it is.*

*Sometimes I take a deeper look in.  
Sometimes venture in a little farther,  
But my place seems closer to the opening.  
So I stand by the door.*

*There is another reason why I stand there.  
Some people get part way in and become afraid  
Lest God and the zeal of His house devour them;  
For God is so very great and asks all of us.  
And these people feel a cosmic claustrophobia  
And want to get out. 'Let me out!' they cry.  
And the people way inside only terrify them  
more....*

*The people too far in do not see how near these  
are  
To leaving—preoccupied with the wonder of it  
all.  
Somebody must watch for those who have  
entered the door  
But would like to run away. So for them too,  
I stand by the door.*

*I admire the people who go way in.  
But I wish they would not forget how it was  
Before they got in. Then they would be able to  
help  
The people who have not yet even found the  
door.  
Or the people who want to run away again  
from God.  
You can go in too deeply and stay in too long  
And forget the people outside the door.  
As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,  
Near enough to God to hear Him and know He  
is there,  
But not so far from men as not to hear them,  
And remember they are there too.*

*Where? Outside the door—  
Thousands of them. Millions of them.  
But—more important for me—  
One of them, two of them, ten of them.  
Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.  
So I shall stand by the door and wait  
For those who seek it.*

*'I had rather be a door-keeper  
So I stand by the door.*