

Was the "eye of the needle" a small city gate?

Question: Jesus said "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." I have been told that "the eye of the needle" was a small gate entrance to a city. For the camel to get through the "eye of the needle" (the city gate), it had to get on its knees. Is this correct?

Answer: The "eye of the needle" does not mean a city gate. In the 15th century, some theologians presented the notion that the "eye of the needle" was not a literal needle, but was interpreted to mean a small gate entrance to a city. (Apparently when the architect was designing the gates, he forgot about all the camels that needed to get in the city!)

Luke the physician (Col. 4:14) clears up the mystery. He carefully chose the Greek word for a surgeon's needle (Luke 18:25), thus nullifying the "small city gate" interpretation.

Jesus chose a camel for his illustration because it was the largest animal in Israel. He selected the eye of the needle because it was the smallest opening. And He used the rich man as an example because people in that day believed a wealthy person was the most likely to make it to heaven. By combining these three elements, He created a totally impossible situation.

The correct interpretation is this: No one, rich or poor, is going to enter the kingdom of heaven without God doing a miracle to get him or her there. A camel can go through the eye of a needle if God disassembles the camel, passes it through molecule by molecule, and reassembles it on the other side. That's impossible with men, but possible with God. We can only enter the kingdom if God miraculously transfers our souls there. To find out more about how to get to heaven, read ["How can I know that I'm going to heaven?"](#)