

• *A wonderful question*

One day, Jesus was asked a question, 'Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?' ¹. It is a wonderful question. How many people – we wonder – will ever get to experience salvation? Will the world ever get to be mainly Christians? How much will the gospel succeed in this world? Jesus spoke of winning the nations, but how successful will we be?

¹ 13:22-23

• *But never answered!*

It was a wonderful question – but Jesus never answered it! His reply was: 'Make every effort to enter through the narrow door!'

1. Christian teaching is not to become an intellectual hobby in which we discuss interesting questions

1. **Christian teaching is not to become an intellectual hobby in which we discuss interesting questions.** God's church does not go forward through head-knowledge only. People can know the answer to many questions, but yet have little spiritual power. The important thing is to apply what you know. I sometimes get involved in 'question-times' or 'discussion meetings' or 'picking the pastor's brains' (as it was once called!). But I become less and less interested in those kinds of meetings. They seem to me to be entirely useless! Christian teaching is never to become simply a matter of intellectually interesting questions. There will be plenty of good theologians in hell – except that they were not good enough in their theology to ask fewer questions and spend more time in seeking to live what they knew! To 'strive to enter the narrow door', even though we know little of the answers to our questions, would help many of us. This man had a wonderfully interesting question, 'Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?' but Jesus was more concerned that he should respond to what he already knew, than that he should discover the answer to something else. So Jesus answers in an unexpected way.

• *Jesus was more concerned something else*

2. Jesus spoke of entering the narrow door

2. **Jesus spoke of entering the narrow door**¹. It was one of His ways of speaking of fully experiencing everything that God wants to do for us. This man wanted head-knowledge, but Jesus wanted much more for him than that. He wanted the man to get through the 'narrow door' into the full blessing of the kingdom. It is not simply 'getting saved' that Jesus has in mind, or what Paul would call 'justification by faith'. 'The kingdom' means more than justification by faith, in Paul's sense of the phrase. It refers to the power of a life of godliness and ministry in the things of God.

¹ 13:24

• *A full experience*

3. Jesus spoke of many missing the way

3. **Jesus spoke of many missing the way.** There will be many people, Jesus says, who will miss the 'narrow door' of experiencing His power in their lives. To fully experience the blessings of God's kingdom we have to leave behind worldliness, the concern for worldly pleasures. We have to leave behind our pride, our love of ease, our self-protectiveness. It is difficult to squeeze through the narrow door. Some things have to be left behind.

• *Some things to be left behind*

4. Lost opportunity

4. **Jesus spoke of lost opportunity.** Many people will want to enter into the blessings of the godly life only when it is too late. It will be too late because the door will already be closed. Three things can 'close the door' of entry into God's kingdom-blessings: (i) the final coming of Jesus; (ii) death; (iii) the day when God 'swears in His wrath' that no further progress will be made and the door to spiritual growth is closed.

• *A closed door*

Once that door is closed – for whatever reason – many blessings of the kingdom will be lost.

5. Knowledge about Jesus is not enough

5. **Jesus warned that knowing about Him will not be enough to save anyone.** In a day when the door has been closed there will be people who know 'about' Jesus, even people who met Him on the streets of Israel and who had meals with Him or heard Him preach – yet who will be excluded from the blessings of God's kingdom¹. They knew 'about' Him, but never submitted to Him.

13:25-27

6. Bitter regrets and deep sorrow

6. **Jesus spoke of bitter regrets and deep sorrow.** There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth on that day. People who knew a lot about Jesus will be excluded¹. How many will be saved? The doorway is narrow! But there will be many in the kingdom of God².

13:28

13:29

7. Surprising discoveries in the last day

7. **Jesus spoke of surprising discoveries in the last day¹.** Some who were 'first' in this world will be 'last' in that day. Some who seem very insignificant in this world will be greatly rewarded with kingdom-blessings.

13:30

In the next little unit of Luke's Gospel¹ Jesus Himself gives us an example of what it means to 'strive' to do God's will.

13:31-35

• A time of weeping and gnashing of teeth was not so far away for the very people who were listening to His voice!

Jesus Himself was living for God while He could. Someone warned Him that He was in danger from Herod¹ but Jesus was not troubled. While He was doing God's will He was in no danger². His death in Jerusalem would certainly be brought about by God at the right time. The thought of what would happen when people were taken by surprise in the judgement of God led Jesus into great grief. He loved Jerusalem, and would dearly have liked to gather Jerusalem to Himself³ but the city was under judgement and soon would be destroyed⁴. Roman soldiers would destroy it in AD 70. A time of weeping and gnashing of teeth was not so far away for the very people who were listening to His voice!

13:31



13:32-33

13:34

13:35

• Strive to enter by the narrow door

Strive to enter by the narrow door! Be like Jesus Himself, living for God, caring little about the dangers that come from the world's opposition. Most painful of all, we have to leave 'self' behind. This self-centredness of ours cannot be squeezed through the narrow door. 'Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?' Jesus will not talk to us about other people; He will only say something to us about ourselves. Strive to enter by the narrow door!

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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