

STRIVE TO ENTER (PART 1)

Luke 13:22-30
Yeshua §114

INTRODUCTION

Group projects were all the rage when I was in 4th, 5th and 6th grades. In history we had to do a group report on Peru. We had to include samples of Peruvian food, clothing and music. We had to make a display with Peru's national flag, a map, pictures of different climates and then we had to write a report and do a presentation about Peru's history, political system, religions and economics. All this before personal computers or the Internet.

I didn't like group projects. They were a lot of work and, inevitably, I did most of it. There were always 1 or 2 who did next to nothing. I was a conscientious student driven to make good grades. Granted, I benefited by doing the work. I not only learned the most about Peru, but I learned how to do research, how to organize my material and write a report and I developed public speaking skills presenting it to the class. But even though I gained the most, it still wasn't fair every member of my group received the same grade when I did the bulk of the work.

TRANSITION

Is heaven going to be a huge Christian group project?

Will all Christians receive the same heavenly blessings because we're all part of this "group"? Will carnal¹ Christians receive the same blessings as kingdom² Christians?

You may be shocked by our Lord's teaching in Luke 13:22-30.

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
Part 2.	The Authentication of the King
Part 3.	The Controversy over the King
Part 4.	The Training of the Twelve by the King
Part 5.	The Opposition to the King
Part 6.	The Preparation of the Disciples by the King <i>Instruction Concerning Entrance into the Kingdom</i>
Part 7.	The Official Presentation of the King
Part 8.	The Preparation for the Death of the King
Part 9.	The Trial of the King:
Part 10.	The Death of the King
Part 11.	The Resurrection and the Ascension of the King
Part 12.	The Sequels

¹ Carnal Christians: believers in Christ living to satisfy self-centered desires.

² Kingdom Christians: believers in Christ living to advance God's Kingdom.

SCRIPTURE TEXT – LUKE 13:22-30

22 He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, 24 “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ 26 Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ 27 But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ 28 In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. 29 And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

TRANSITION

To understand this passage, it is extremely important we understand the question in verse 23.

UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTION (LUKE 13:22-23)

22 He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?”

What is this person asking?

Is he asking, “*Lord, will those **who go to heaven** be few?*”

Most assume this meaning, including the commentaries, because of a common mistake. Most assume the word “save” always means “go to heaven when you die”. But the core meaning of “save” is “to deliver”.

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From what a person or thing needs to be “*delivered*” is determined by context. For instance, what did the hemorrhaging woman mean when she said to herself, “*If I touch even his garments, I will be saved.*”³

She would be delivered from her illness.

TRANSITION

What, then, is this question asking, “*Lord, will those who are saved be few?*”

First, we need to discover *who* is in view; *who* needs to be delivered.

Second, we need to discover from *what* they need to be delivered.

QUESTION #1

WHO NEEDS TO BE DELIVERED?

We believe those who need to be delivered are believers in Jesus for the following reasons:

- Jesus is preaching in towns/villages which the 72 disciples discovered were still favorable to Jesus’ message (Luke 10:1-12).
- In verses 23 and 25, Jesus’ hearers address Him as “*Lord*” indicating respect and a favorable response to His person.
- In verse 26 Jesus’ hearers are described as those who ate and drank with Jesus and listened to His teaching. Eating and drinking with someone in a 1st century, middle eastern culture indicates acceptance and fellowship.
- Even though they receive a negative assessment of their earthly lives in verse 27, according to verse 28, they will be in the Messianic Kingdom⁴.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.

³ Mark 5:28 Unfortunately, some translations interpret *sozo* (Grk. *save*) as “*heal*” so you don’t realize how “*save*” is being used.

⁴ The physical form of the Kingdom of Heaven and the Messianic Kingdom are one and the same. The Messianic Kingdom, also called the Millennial Kingdom because its duration is a thousand years, is a literal, physical kingdom as real as the world we live in today. It is NOT some ethereal, dream-like state of existence. There will be farms and food, houses and apartments, cars, trucks, trains and planes. Governments, courts, law enforcement, schools, businesses and manufacturing. There will be families and babies and life as we know it today with major differences – Jesus will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords! And resurrected Old Testament, Tribulation and Church Age saints will serve in Jesus’ administration.

- In Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus clearly teaches believers who are disobedient to God's Law in this life will be in the Messianic Kingdom.

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

ANSWER #1

Based on these observations, we conclude it is believers who need to be delivered.

BELIEVERS NEED TO BE DELIVERED

TRANSITION

From *what* do believers need to be delivered?

QUESTION #2

FROM WHAT DO BELIEVERS NEED TO BE DELIVERED?

Believers need to be delivered from the carnal life and the loss it brings in the Messianic Kingdom.

We base this conclusion on the following observations:

- In verse 27, Jesus' hearers will receive a negative evaluation of their life on earth. Jesus refers to them as "workers of evil". In a Jewish context, a "worker of evil" is a person who did not diligently keep God's Law which, in that dispensation, was the Law of Moses; in our dispensation it is the Law of Messiah.
- Again, in verses 28-29 Jesus indicates His hearers will be in the Messianic Kingdom but will have lost the privilege to participate in the Messianic Banquet (Isaiah 25:6). They will be cast outside of the banquet hall where

they will experience deep regret which is the meaning of the idiom, "weeping and gnashing of teeth".

28 In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. 29 And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

ANSWER #2

We conclude believers need to be delivered from the carnal life and the loss it will bring in the Messianic Kingdom.

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CONCLUSION

Now we can understand the question in verse 23:

"Lord, will those who are saved be few?"

We can rephrase it this way:

"Lord, will those believers who are delivered from the carnal life and the loss it will bring in the Messianic Kingdom be few?"

How did Jesus answer the question?

The first part of His reply:

"Strive to enter through the narrow door"

... is actually an application that flows from His answer in the second sentence of His reply. His answer to the question is this:

"For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."

To "seek to enter through the narrow door" is the means of being saved.

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Jesus' point is that many born-again believers will seek to be delivered from the carnal life, but will not be able. I know this raises many questions, but come back next week and we'll answer those questions.

BIG IDEA STATED

In answer to the question of verse 23, Jesus sadly answers:

Few believers will be delivered from the carnal life and the loss it will bring in the Messianic Kingdom.

Comment [PKN1]: Few believers will be delivered from the carnal life and the loss it brings now and in the Messianic Kingdom.

BIG IDEA REPHRASED

Said another way:

Few believers will gain kingdom life in the here and now and reward in the Messianic Kingdom.

This is sobering to say the least.

Undoubtedly it grieved Jesus to reveal this to His audience. His application proves He wants better for His followers, "*Strive to enter through the narrow door*". Entering through the narrow door is the means by which believers are delivered from the carnal life to kingdom life. We'll look at that in detail next week.

APPLICATION

But for now I pray two things will happen in our hearts and minds.

First, I pray we come to an accurate understanding of our future in Christ. It is not some ethereal float on the clouds forever. It is a kingdom here on earth very much like the life we experience today. Jesus will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Those believers who faithfully lived for God in this life will have proved they can be entrusted with much authority in the Messianic Kingdom. Since they lived for the kingdom in this life, they will experience the greater joy of being in the kingdom when it comes.

Second, I pray we will take time this week to evaluate ourselves. Am I carnal, living for myself or am I kingdom, living for Christ? If someone looked at how I spend my time, my money, and where I put my energy would they conclude I'm living for the kingdom? We will be looking into this more deeply in our next study, but I think in light of what we've discovered this morning, some healthy self-evaluation is in order.