

Are There Just A Few Who Are Being Saved?

Luke 13:22-24

It's difficult to read tone when words are in print. Who asked this question of Jesus? It seems that the person who asked Jesus this question is not one of the twelve disciples (see 13:28). Some, including me, believe this is a self-complacent, smug question by a Jew that challenges the teachings of Jesus Christ. The general understanding among the Jews was that all Jews - except the very worst - would be saved. The Mishnah was explicit about this: "All Israelites have a share in the world to come... (Sanhedrin 10.1)

I. Jesus answers this general "numbers" question with a personal response.

It is quite possible that those most interested in theological debate are without any *self*-awareness.

"If a book could be published by authority detailing the number of the saved, man would hasten to read it. It would be far wiser to ask, "Shall I be saved?" (Spurgeon)

A. Personal salvation involves striving.

"Strive to enter through the narrow door" (Luke 13:24). Strive translates *agōnizesthe*, from which we see the word *agonize*. The implication is that we must struggle, wrestle, and exert ourselves.

B. Personal salvation involves separation.

The only other place where Jesus uses this word is **John 18:36**, where he says his disciples would be "fighting" if his kingdom were of this world. "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting [ēgōnizonto], that I might not be delivered over to the Jews." "Strive to enter" means "fight to separate" from the world.

C. Personal salvation involves simplicity.

Remember, Jesus speaks of entering a "narrow door. In Matt. 7:13 he speaks of a "narrow gate." "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." (Matthew 19:24).

The Needle Gate in Jerusalem allowed only one person without possessions on his camel to enter.

II. Jesus answers this general "numbers" question while going to persons needing deliverance.

Warren Wiersbe comments that "The events recorded in John 9–10 fit between Luke 13:21 and Luke 13:22. Note in John 10:40–42 that Jesus then left Judea and went beyond the Jordan into Perea. The events of Luke 13:22 thru Luke 17:10 took place in Perea as the Lord moved toward Jerusalem."

A. Jesus intentionally "passed through" Perea like we should intentionally pass through the world.

Jesus did not waste one precious moment. And neither should we as we are "passing through" this world blinded to His life-giving Gospel (see II Cor. 4:4; II Cor. 4:5,6 and John 3:18-21).

B. Jesus took every occasion to actively teach the truth of life to those in need of salvation.

He walked along those dusty roads with His disciples knowing that the end of the road was His death on a Roman Cross, but fully aware that this would accomplish His triumph over all things.

C. In the end, the numbers of those saved will exceed the numbers of those lost (in my opinion).

God's people and "the world" are synonymous; they are from every race, every ethnic group, every nation, every tribe, and every family. God has chosen to save far more sinners from their rebellion than He has chosen to judge in their rebellion. The kingdom of God is compared to a vast sea (Revelation 4:6); hell is compared to a small lake. The kingdom of God is compared to a vast city (Hebrews 11:16); hell is compared to a small prison. The kingdom of God represents lives (and eventually the earth) where the curse of sin is reversed; hell is the abyss where the curse of sin is submersed. *Salvation is not a theory to discuss, it is a miracle to experience.* Have you?