


Are We Too Narrow-minded?



Church of Christ

- ▶ Those words sometimes stir strong emotions.
 - ▶ “Bigoted.” “Narrow-minded.” “Think they are the only ones going to heaven.”
 - ▶ I prefer to leave eternal judgments up to God.
 - ▶ But would probably be considered narrow-minded by many.
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The “Narrow-mindedness” of Jesus and the Apostles

- ▶ Only access to the Father. John 14:6
 - “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one** comes to the Father except through Me.’”
- ▶ Wrath of God on unbelievers. John 3:36
 - “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

The “Narrow-mindedness” of Jesus and the Apostles

- ▶ Only access to the Father. John 14:6
- ▶ Wrath of God on unbelievers. John 3:36
- ▶ The only saving name. Acts 4:10–12
 - “By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole....Nor is there salvation in any other, for **there is no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

The “Narrow-mindedness” of Jesus and the Apostles

- ▶ Only access to the Father. John 14:6
- ▶ Wrath of God on unbelievers. John 3:36
- ▶ The only saving name. Acts 4:10–12
- ▶ Do these claims seem narrow-minded?
 - Did they in Jesus’ time?
 - In Japan, Iran, India, Saudi Arabia, Israel?
 - Different ethnic communities in the USA?

The “Narrow-mindedness” of Jesus and the Apostles

- ▶ A narrow gate and difficult way few find. Matt. 7:13–14
 - “Enter by the **narrow** gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because **narrow** is the gate and **difficult** is the way which leads to life, and there are **few who find it.**”

The “Narrow-mindedness” of Jesus and the Apostles

- ▶ A narrow gate and difficult way few find.
Matt. 7:13–14
- ▶ Not all who call Jesus Lord. Matt. 7:21–23
 - “**Not everyone** who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” **shall enter the kingdom of heaven**, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ ”


The “Narrow-mindedness” of Jesus and the Apostles

- ▶ A narrow gate and difficult way few find.
Matt. 7:13–14
- ▶ Not all who call Him Lord. Matt. 7:21–23
- ▶ To be worshiped in truth. John 4:21–24
 - “**True worshipers** will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

The “Narrow-mindedness” of Jesus and the Apostles

- ▶ A narrow gate and difficult way few find. Matt. 7:13–14
- ▶ Not all who call Jesus Lord. Matt. 7:21–23
- ▶ To be worshiped in truth. John 4:21–24
- ▶ Seven ones. Eph. 4:4–6
 - “There is **one body** and **one Spirit**, just as you were called in **one hope** of your calling; **one Lord**, **one faith**, **one baptism**; **one God and Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The “Narrow-mindedness” of Jesus and the Apostles

- ▶ A narrow gate and difficult way few find. Matt. 7:13–14
 - ▶ Not all who call Jesus Lord. Matt. 7:21–23
 - ▶ To be worshiped in truth. John 4:21–24
 - ▶ Seven ones. Eph. 4:4–6
 - ▶ The N.T. had an exclusiveness or narrowness about it, but that is the nature of truth.
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Truth Requires “Narrow-mindedness”

▶ $2 + 2 =$

Truth Requires “Narrow-mindedness”

- ▶ $2 + 2 = 5$
 - What if sincere?
 - What if parents believe the answer to be 5?
 - What if teacher admits to not knowing everything about calculus?
- ▶ $2 + 2 = 4$

Truth Requires “Narrow-mindedness”

- ▶ Some things are subjective, such as beauty, taste in foods, etc., but...
- ▶ Rutabagas are not fried chicken, no matter what you call them.

The Bible and Truth

- ▶ The truth will make you free. John 8:31–32
 - “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”
 - Freedom requires truth—not opinions, traditions, or lies.


The Bible and Truth

- ▶ The truth will make you free. John 8:32
- ▶ Purified and brought forth by the word of truth.
1 Peter 1:22–23; James 1:18
 - “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”
 - “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”

The Bible and Truth

- ▶ The truth will make you free. John 8:32
- ▶ Purified and brought forth by the word of truth.
1 Peter 1:22–23; James 1:18
- ▶ Must walk in truth. 3 John 1:3–4
 - “For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

The Bible and Truth

- ▶ The truth will make you free. John 8:32
 - ▶ Purified and brought forth by the word of truth.
1 Peter 1:22–23; James 1:18
 - ▶ Must walk in truth. 3 John 1:3–4
 - ▶ Must be “narrow-minded” enough to stay within the bounds of truth.
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How Do We Find the Truth?

- ▶ What is the truth? How do we separate truth from lies?
- ▶ Pilate. John 18:37–38
 - “ ‘I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘**What is truth?**’ ”

How Do We Find the Truth?

- ▶ What is the truth? How do we separate truth from lies?
- ▶ Pilate. John 18:37–38
- ▶ David Wilhelm
 - “Only God possesses absolute truth. None of us can declare other points of view as invalid or irreligious. From the depths of our conviction we must remember the guideline, ‘Judge not lest ye be judged.’ ”

How Do We Find the Truth?

- ▶ What is the truth? How do we separate truth from lies?
- ▶ God's word is truth. Psalm 119:151;
John 17:17
 - "You are near, O LORD, And all Your commandments are truth."
 - "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

How Do We Find the Truth?

- ▶ God's word is truth. John 17:17
- ▶ This truth is complete. John 16:13
 - “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into **all truth.**”


How Do We Find the Truth?

- ▶ God's word is truth. John 17:17
- ▶ This truth is complete. John 16:13
- ▶ As it relates to salvation and spiritual matters.
2 Timothy 3:16, 17
 - "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**"

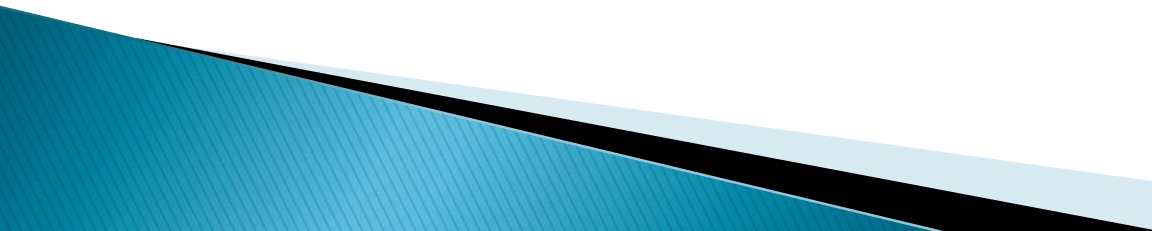
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- ▶ This truth is complete. John 16:13
- ▶ As it relates to salvation and spiritual matters.
2 Timothy 3:16–17
- ▶ Can be read and understood. Ephesians 3:3–5
 - “I have briefly written already, by which, when you **read**, you may **understand** my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.”

Are We Narrow-minded Legalists If We...

- ▶ Contend for strict adherence to God's word?
 - ▶ Insist that if God's word is truth, doctrines and practices differing from the Bible are false?
 - Not a matter of sincerity, but truth.
 - See the example of Jacob. Gen. 37:31–35
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How Committed Are We to Truth?

- ▶ “Church of Christ” doctrine is no good.
 - ▶ But commitment to being as narrow as God’s word and rejection of men’s doctrines are commendable.
Matthew 15:1–3, 8–9
 - ▶ Be open-minded in the search, but “narrow” enough to hold to the truth.
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Who Should Be Baptized?

Matt. 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16; Acts 2:38

Those capable of discipleship.

Believers.

Those who repent.

Infants

The Act of Baptism

John 3:23; Acts 8:36, 38–39; Rom. 6:3–4; Col. 2:12

Much water.

Water; both went down into it.

Buried.

Immersion!

Sprinkling

Pouring

Salvation

The obedient. Heb. 5:8–9

Belief and confession. Rom. 10:9–10

Belief and baptism. Mark 16:16

Repentance and baptism. Acts 2:38

Baptized to wash away sins. Acts 22:16

Faith only

Sinner's prayer

Ridicule of baptism

Conclusion

- ▶ Hold to the truth and reject error.
 - ▶ Be open-minded to learning, but know that much must be rejected. 1 John 4:1
 - ▶ Some will call this narrow-minded, for few will hold to truth and oppose the false.
 - ▶ But only the truth will make you free.
 - ▶ Listen to God's truth and act on it!
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