

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
YYY. Christ's Encouraging Motivation To The Faithful Few
(Luke 13:22-30)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the spiritual realities of the human experience is the fact that relatively few people believe in Christ unto salvation, and that a minority of that minority actually spiritually fully blossom. (cf. Matthew 13:18-23)
- B. When we believers notice this fact, we can become discouraged or disillusioned, a concern that Jesus' disciples faced in the latter part of His earthly ministry.
- C. Jesus spoke on this issue in Luke 13:22-30, so we view the passage for our insight, application and edification:

II. Christ's Encouraging Motivation To The Faithful Few, Luke 13:22-30.

- A. As Jesus began His ministry in Perea during the latter part of His earthly ministry, "(a)ppearantly His followers were somewhat discouraged that His message of the kingdom was not sweeping the nation as they thought it would." Thus, one disciple asked if only a few people would be saved so as to enter the Messianic Kingdom (Luke 13:22-23; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 241).
- B. Christ's response to this question was that His followers should strive to enter His kingdom through the narrow gate, for many would seek to enter it but would be unable to do so, Luke 13:24 ESV.
- C. Just why and how this difficulty would occur is illustrated in the parable Jesus then gave about a man who was giving a feast in Luke 13:25-27 (as follows):
 - 1. In the parable, the Master of the house who gives the feast is Christ, the feast is the Messianic Kingdom, and the people who were kept out of the feast were the unbelieving people of Israel in Jesus' era.
 - 2. The Master giving the feast eventually gets up and closes the door, and the people on the outside who cannot enter the house to participate in the feast stand outside, knocking on the door to ask the Master to open it so they can enter and participate in the feast. Though they ask the Master to open the door, the Master says that He does not know where they are from, Luke 13:25.
 - 3. The people then begin to say that they had eaten and drunk in the Master's presence, that He had taught in their streets, an obvious reference to that generation of Hebrews who witnessed Christ's earthly ministry wherein He had offered the Messianic Kingdom to the people of Israel, Luke 13:26.
 - 4. The Master then answers that He did not know these people, and He charges them to depart from Him as evildoers, Luke 13:27. These people would then experience weeping and gnashing of teeth, a reference in the gospels to Hebrew people in Israel who will miss the Messianic Kingdom blessings as they are cast into eternal hell in condemnation, cf. Luke 13:28a; *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 - 5. That anguish will be intensified as these doomed people witness Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets in the Messianic Kingdom of God while they themselves are cast out, Luke 13:28b.
 - 6. Even more traumatic, and what was a revolutionary idea to the Hebrews of Jesus' era, Jesus said that Gentile believers would come from the east, west, north and south – from all corners of the globe – and recline at the table of the feast in the Kingdom of God along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all of Israel's prophets while the unbelieving Hebrews of Jesus' era would be cast out into condemnation, Luke 13:29.
 - 7. Thus, many who were considered the last to enter the Kingdom by the Hebrew people, that is Gentiles, would be first since they were believers, where many who considered themselves to be the first to enter the Kingdom since they were Hebrews would be last in being kept out of it (Luke 13:30; *Ibid.*, p. 241).
 - 8. By way of interpretation, then, Jesus taught His followers that their entrance into the Messianic Kingdom was not dependent on their Hebrew physical ancestry, but on their exercise of personal faith in Christ for salvation from sin and hell. Justification was thus by faith, just as Abraham was justified when he was still a Gentile before he was circumcised to become a Hebrew in Genesis 15:6 (with Genesis 17:1-14, 23-27).

Lesson: *Though Christ's salvation is open to all people, only those individuals who trust in Christ for their own salvation from sin and hell will be justified by God and enter the Millennial Kingdom. Thus, all people, Hebrew or Gentile alike, must strive to enter that Kingdom by faith and not by works or by physical or national heritage.*

Application: *(1) May we put our faith in Christ to be saved from sin and hell lest we be cast into hell in eternal condemnation. (2) May we believers realize that even among believers, there will be differing degrees of spiritual maturity and productivity based on varying degrees of heeding God's Word according to Matthew 13:23. Thus, may we not be disillusioned by the failure of many other believers to grow in Christ, but focus on our own walk!*