

# ***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **MORE ABOUT JESUS LESSONS** **“The Narrow-Minded Jesus”**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

In the world in which we live, many people see Jesus as an open-minded religious leader Who was accepting of all different views and paths inside Christianity. A person could believe what he wanted or feel whatever he wished, and Jesus would be all right with that. But is that the way in which the Bible describes Jesus? Or, was Jesus narrow minded in many ways? By narrow minded, we mean, “Did Jesus state that there was one, and only one, path by which a person could do something? Or, were there a multiplicity of different views that people could hold and be acceptable to Jesus?” We are going to examine today the narrow-minded Jesus of Scripture. We are going to look at some of the “must” statements of Jesus or some of the “if and only if” statements that Jesus made, which show that Jesus was not an open-minded religious leader who allowed just about anything, but was instead rather narrow minded in His view of morality and in His view of salvation. In many of His views, Jesus knew that there was one, and only one, way to please the Father.

We begin today by noting that Jesus was narrow minded concerning righteous living. Jesus clearly taught that there was only one way to live and to be right with God. In Matthew 23, Jesus was condemning the unrighteousness of the Pharisees, who would go half-way around the world to make a proselyte, but then make him “twice as much as son of hell” as they were (vs. 15). They would stand on the street corners and pray long prayers, yet their prayers were not heartfelt because they did not really think about what they were saying. These were people who wanted to do exactly what the law said in certain areas, but then they left out other things according to Matthew 23. Jesus said this in Matthew 5: 20, “Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus clearly taught that our righteousness must go beyond a superficial “looks like we’re right” type of attitude, and that we must truly live according to the standard of God’s will. The Pharisees were people who were respected as religious leaders. They wore the right clothing, and they had frontlets between their eyes, so that people would see them and think, “Ah, religious leaders!” Yet they were not that way. Jesus described them in Matthew 23 as “whitewashed tombs.” They looked pretty, and they were ornate on the outside, but inside they were full of dead men’s bones. Jesus knew that there was only one way to live that was **really** righteous. That way was to back up what you said by your lifestyle. Jesus did this, for we see in Luke 2:49 that when His parents were looking for Him, they asked Him, “Where have you been?” He replied, “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Jesus made sure that He was not only representative of righteous **teaching**, but that He also was representative of righteous **living**. Jesus lived what He taught. That is the only way that a person can live and be acceptable to God. We cannot say one thing and then do another. We cannot do one thing but say another. We must live exactly what we say, and we must say exactly what we live. For example, in 1 Peter 1:14-15, Peter was quoting from Leviticus 11:44. He said, “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy.” Just as God is a holy and right-

eous God, our conduct also must be that way. As Peter viewed the Second Coming of the Lord (2 Peter 3:10-12), he noted that we do not know when the Lord will come, but we do know that He will come in a flaming fire to take vengeance on those who do not know God. He then asked, "What manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" (vs. 11). Christians ought to have a holy and righteous conduct in every way. Jesus was very narrow minded regarding righteous living.

Jesus also was narrow minded about being converted to the Cause of Christ. There are a lot of people who may be convinced of certain facts, and who may have a mental knowledge about the Jesus of the Bible, but there is a big difference between just knowing the facts and truly being converted. Jesus said in Matthew 18:3, "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Jesus described those who would be in the kingdom as being like little children. Think about the characteristics of a child. A child trusts you completely. Christians are to be trusting, too. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Like children, we not only have to be trusting, but we also have to be innocent in our lifestyles. We must walk in the light and be truly converted to the Cause of Christ. John said it this way in 1 John 1:7, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." We try to be perfect, just as our Father in Heaven is perfect (Mt. 5:48). Thus, we must be **converted**, not just convicted or convinced. The difference between being convinced and converted is this. A person may come to realize facts, and may ascertain a certain amount of Bible knowledge that he recognizes as true. But a person who is converted with do whatever it takes to follow up that knowledge with the right kind of living. I believe that the apostle Paul was not just convinced and convicted, but also truly converted to the Cause of Christ. In fact, I know he was, for when Paul became a Christian by obeying the Gospel, he gave his life to the Cause of Christ. There were many times when Paul almost died because of his convictions. Paul was **so** converted that he was living to give his life to the Cause of Christ. In Acts 14:21-22, after Paul had been stoned and left for dead, he arose and said, "We must, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom of God." Paul was willing to get on a boat (a boat that was going into a horrible storm) in order to follow up on his beliefs and go to Rome to preach the Gospel there. A growing problem that seems to be occurring in the church today is when people seem to be convinced that there is just one church, and that baptism is essential for salvation, but they never follow up on those beliefs with any kind of action. People who attend church services once a week to "get their ticket punched" may be **convinced**, but they have not been **converted** to the Cause of Christ. We need to understand that if we truly obey the Gospel, then we will follow up with a reaction to the Gospel message that keeps us going strong for Jesus every day.

Jesus also was narrow minded regarding the essentiality of repentance. He clearly taught that if a person did not repent of past sins, then he could not be right in God's sight. This was not an option to Jesus. The example is found in Luke 13:1-5. The people offered Jesus two illustrations by asking Him first about people whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Jesus asked, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?" The people then asked about eighteen men on whom the tower of Siloam had fallen. They wanted to know if this event represented the wrath of God because these men were worse sinners than their counterparts. Jesus said, "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." Here were people who wanted to point out the sins of others, and who wanted to bring down the vengeance of God upon horrible sinners. Jesus could have agreed with them, but He did not. Why? It was because He did not want to place the emphasis on just those people.

Rather, He wanted the emphasis to be on the hearts of the people who were asking the questions. There were people who were inquiring about the sins of others when, instead, they needed to make changes in their own lives. That is what repentance is. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, we see a good example of what repentance is. Paul said of the Christian in Thessalonica that they had “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” They had changed their way of life. But they did not stop there. They did not just turn **from idols**. They also turned **to God** in order to serve Him in very way. That is the idea behind repentance. We make a changed will that leads to a changed way of life. Certain people think that repentance does not involve action. Rather, it involves things like tears, crying, and a lot of heartfelt emotion. The text of 2 Corinthians 7:10 says that is not the case. Godly sorrow **produces** repentance, but godly sorry is not repentance itself. Just shedding tears does not mean that a person has truly repented. What is repentance? Repentance is a change that is followed up in your life by your actions. Let me illustrate. In Luke 3:7-8, John the Baptist said to certain members of the religious elite who had come out to him to be baptized in the Jordan River, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.” John was preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. John’s baptism necessitated that if a person was going to be right before God, then he had to repent and make changes in his life. These people seemed to be coming to John to be baptized just so they could be like everyone else. It was “what was happening” in the religious world at that time, and they just wanted to be a part of it. But John did not permit that. He referred to them as “a brood of vipers,” and told them to make changes in their lives so that they could show by their repentance that they were ready to obey God through baptism. Thus, Jesus taught that repentance is essential. Repentance is something that the Christian must go through on almost a daily basis. When we sin, like in Acts 8:20-22 when Simon sinned, we need to pray to God and ask that the evil thoughts of our hearts and our evil actions might be forgiven us.

Jesus also was narrow minded on the necessity of baptism. We live in a world where baptism often is seen as “an outward sign of an inward grace,” or it is viewed as an outward show of our faith. Is that what Jesus taught about baptism? What did Jesus have to say on this very important subject? Jesus often taught that baptism was essential. Jesus was so narrow minded that He said that a person could not get to Heaven without being baptized. Let me illustrate for you. In John 3:1-5, Nicodemus came to Jesus saying, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Nicodemus may have been trying to flatter Jesus, or he may have been trying to start a conversation. But Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus was confused, and asked, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus then said again, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Here, Jesus clearly taught that He was not talking about a second birth from a mother’s womb. Rather, He was speaking about a birth in water caused by the Spirit’s Word, which we can read and understand. That is the birth “in water and in Spirit” of which Jesus was talking. Jesus said that unless we are willing to through that, then we cannot see the kingdom of God. This is not the only time that Jesus emphasized the essentiality of baptism. In Mark 16:16, Jesus, upon giving the Great Commission, said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Jesus said, in that context, that there are two conditions necessary to receive salvation: belief and baptism—which equal the end result of a person being saved from sin. This is in accord with everything that the New Testament says about salvation. In Acts 2:38, Peter said that baptism is “for the remission of sins.” Saul was told, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16).

Jesus also was a narrow-minded Savior when it came to the fullness and inspiration of the Scriptures. There is a passage in Matthew 26 where Jesus shows us just how narrow minded He was about the Scriptures. In verse 54, Jesus said, "How, then, could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" Jesus was talking about how He was going to have to die on the cross and how that God was going to allow this to happen, and He mentions that it was "so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." Jesus knew that it **had** to happen because God had said that it **would** happen. That is how convicted and narrow minded Christ was about the complete inspiration of the Scriptures. We need to know today—in a narrow-minded way—that the Bible is the full and complete Word of God. It is not a book of errors or that leaves us in doubt. Rather, it is the full and complete Word of God. Anyone who tells you anything different is not dealing fairly with the evidence that proves the Bible to be God's Word. Let me illustrate this point for you from Scripture. In Psalm 119:160, the psalmist said, "The entirety of Your word is truth." In 2 Samuel 23:2, David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue." In 1 Corinthians 2:13, we read, "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches." That is the idea behind inspiration. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved or guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:19-21). Probably one of the best-known passages regarding the inspiration of the Bible is 2 Timothy 3:16-17 where Paul said, "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." The Greek word for "inspiration" means "God breathed." That is the literal meaning of the Greek word. God "exhaled" and His Word was the result. Thus, God's Word is inspired and it is full. It had to be fulfilled. Jesus taught that it was full. It was complete. This is in accord with what the New Testament teaches. In James 1:25 we read of "the perfect law of liberty." It is not lacking anything. I love the words of 2 Peter 1:3 where we are told that God "has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us." Through knowledge of the Bible, I can have access to everything that I need to know God and to lead a good life. Aren't you glad we have the Bible? Aren't you glad that God has revealed Himself to us? We need to be narrow minded when it comes to the inspiration and fulness of the Scriptures. Jesus promised in John 16:13 and that He would guide the disciples "into all truth." We have that today in the New Testament and in the Bible.

Jesus also was narrow minded about acceptable worship. In the world in which we live, people seem to think that there are many avenues and many ways in which we can worship God. Jesus did not put it like that. Jesus said in John 4:24, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Jesus did not teach that "everything" was acceptable. He did not teach that men's ideas and thoughts would be all right. He did not teach that we could bring into worship things of our own invention to "help out." Jesus taught that we must worship God "in spirit and in truth." "Spirit" suggests the attitude, heart, and emotion that are involved in our worship. We are taught to "sing with the spirit and sing with the understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15). We ought to have a deep feeling of love and appreciation for God when we worship Him. Our worship must be heartfelt. But it also must be governed by the truth of God's Word. Worship that is heartfelt and that does not contain the teaching of the Scriptures will not glorify God. Worship that contains the teaching of the Scripture is not something that pleases God either. We must have both the heart and the mind engaged according to what the New Testament teaches us. We must do "all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). Toward the close of the New Testament, in Revelation 22:18-19, John said that we must not add to or take away from the Word of God. This is why things like instrumental music are not acceptable to God. You can search the New Testament (we are not talking about the Old Testament, which has been nailed to the cross

—Col. 2:14ff.), but you will not find a command where Christians are told to worship God with the instrument. We know that we must do only that which is commanded. We are not to “go beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6). That being true, we must find a command where a Christian may pick a guitar or play a piano in worship. You can look through the New Testament, but you will not find any teaching of Scripture on that. This is why Christians should not worship in that way. So, Jesus was very narrow minded about worship.

Jesus also was narrow minded concerning the object of our worship. The passage that teaches us this very clearly is found in Matthew 4:10. Jesus had been tempted by Satan, who took Jesus upon the pinnacle of the temple and showed Him all the things around Him. He said, “I will give you these things if you will fall down and worship me.” Jesus said, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.” We need to understand that God is to be the only object of our worship. Too many times, other things can take priority if we allow them to do so. We can worship money if we are not careful. We can worship our homes, our worldly goods, our mate, or even our children more than God. Anything that takes priority over God is what we are worshiping at that time. We must be very careful about this. We can see several examples where people tried to worship something other than God, but were told not to. In Acts 10:26, when Peter came to the house of Cornelius, Cornelius fell down to worship him, but Peter said, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.” Peter was an apostle, but he did not receive worship from others. I think of Revelation 19:10. John was in the presence of an angel, and he fell down before the angel to worship him, but the angel said, “No, see you that you do not do that. Worship God.” We are not to worship people or angels. We are to give our worship only to the God of Heaven.

Jesus also was narrow minded about the time of the Second Coming. I sometimes see items on television, or I see advertisements that come in the mail, which say something like, “Are you ready for the latter-day prophecy to be fulfilled? Jesus is coming, and we know when. Come to our seminar and you can find out.” I can guarantee you one thing for sure—you are **not** going to find out at that seminar **when** Jesus is coming. Anyone who claims that they know the time of the Second Coming does not know enough Bible to fill a thimble. Jesus clearly taught in Matthew 24:34-36 that no man knows the hour when the Son of Man will return. Jesus said that. He also said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (vs. 35). No man knows the time or the hour when the Son of Man will return. It is impossible to get around teaching as plain as that. Jesus Himself said, “You just do not know!” In fact, if we did know, there is the probability that some would wait until the last minute and try to have a deathbed conversion. Jesus said that instead of doing that, we ought to always be ready for the Second Coming (Mk. 13:35). Yes, Jesus is going to come. There is no doubt about it. Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 that Jesus will come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, and the dead will rise first. Then, those who are alive will meet the Lord in the air. We need to know that Jesus **is** coming, but we do not know **when** He is coming. We therefore must **always** stay ready. The idea is, “Be ready!”

Jesus also was narrow minded about the only scriptural reason for divorce. Listen to the words of the Savior in Matthew 19:9. “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” We live in a society where a lot of people get caught up in divorce, and where there are many divorces. But Jesus taught that there are not 101 reasons for divorce. Rather, there is one and only one reason. In Matthew 5:32 and in Matthew 19:9, Jesus said that the only scriptural reason for divorce is adultery. Anyone who divorces for another reason besides that has not been divorced according to God’s will.

The Bible makes it clear, “What God has joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mk. 10:9). All the way back to Genesis 2, God taught that there was to be one man and one woman for life. Thus, we find that the only exception for divorce is for sexual immorality (the Greek word, *pornea*, means illicit sexual activity—something beyond the bounds of marriage). Hebrews 13:4 says, “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” When someone engages in sexual activity outside the marriage bond, then their mate is free to divorce them. But God has not granted the guilty party that right. They are still bound by the original agreement that they made. So, the innocent party (Mt. 19:9) is given a scriptural reason for divorce. But God has not granted the guilty party the right to remarry as well. Yes, Jesus was very narrow minded about this teaching, but we need to understand that marriage is a **privilege**, not a right. We may enter into marriage if we choose to do so because God gave us the privilege of having a husband or a wife so that we could help one another get to Heaven. It is a privilege. But if we do not keep the rules that go along with marriage, then we can lose that privilege. It is not a “right”—something that God owes us. Rather, it is something with which God has blessed us, and we can lose the privilege of being married.

Jesus also was narrow minded concerning the one and only way to the Father. Jesus did not teach, as many do today, that there are many avenues and paths, and we can just choose the way of our choice and God will be all right with that. That is not what Jesus taught. Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus and His teaching are the only way to be sure that when you leave this life, you will spend eternity with God. Do you remember Matthew 7:13-14? Jesus said that there are only two paths. “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.” Jesus taught that most people are going down the wrong path in this life. He taught that there are few who are finding the right way.

Today, I would like to ask you if your view of Jesus is in accord with what the Scriptures teach. Do you see Jesus as being narrow minded on the teachings and principles to which we have referred today? If not, then you may need to make some changes in your life. If you are not a child of God, you can become one today by hearing the Word of God, by believing that Jesus is the only way to salvation, by understanding the necessity of repentance, by confession of Christ as your Savior, and by baptism for the remission of sins. Once you have been baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins, you can know that you are a child of God, and you then must rise in newness of life to live the Christian life. May God help each of us, as we think about the nature of Christ, and as we think about what Jesus is really like, to inculcate His life into ours and to live in such a way that when we leave this Earth, we will have left a good impression on those who remain behind. As we think about the narrow-minded Jesus, may we live our lives only by one guide—the Word of God itself. And may we be as narrow as the Bible demands, and teach what God has said.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST* is brought to you by loving, caring members of the church of Christ. The McLish Avenue church of Christ in Ardmore, Oklahoma, oversees this evangelistic effort. For a free CD or DVD of today's broadcast, please write to:

***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***  
**607 McLish Ave.**  
**Ardmore, OK 73401**

You may call **580-223-3289**. Please visit us on the web at [www.thegospelofchrist.com](http://www.thegospelofchrist.com). We encourage you to attend the church of Christ, where “the Bible is loved and the Gospel is preached.”

## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE NARROW-MINDED JESUS”

1. For what did Jesus criticize the Pharisees in Matthew 23?
2. What does 1 Peter 1:14-15 have to do with Christ being narrow minded in regard to righteous living?
3. What did Christ mean by His statement in Matthew 18:3, “Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven”?
4. What, according to Proverbs 3:5-6, are we to do?
5. What, according to Proverbs 3:5-6, are we **not** to do?
6. According to Paul’s comment in Acts 14:21-22, what might be required of us as members of Christ’s kingdom?
7. In Luke 13:3, what did Christ urge people to do?
8. According to 1 John 1:7, what cleanses us of our sins?
9. According to 1 John 1:7, what do we have if we “walk in the light”?
10. What, according to Matthew 5:48, is God?
11. In Luke 3:8, what did John the Immerser urge some of the people of his generation to produce?
12. According to 2 Corinthians 7:10, what does godly sorrow produce?
13. In John 3:5, what did Jesus say a person had to do to enter the kingdom of God?
14. Who, according to Jesus’ statement in Mark 16:16, will be saved?
15. What, according to Psalm 119:160, is the entirety of God’s Word?
16. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, what did Paul have to say about the Scriptures?
17. According to the words of 2 Peter 1:3, what has God given us?
18. How, according to John 4:24, are we to worship God?
19. According to Matthew 24:34-36, when will Christ’s Second Coming occur?
20. Who, according to Matthew 4:10, is to be the sole object of our worship?
21. What type of worship does Revelation 19:10 forbid?
22. What type of worship does Acts 10:26 forbid?