

On the Narrow Door

A Gospel Reflection from Brian Wigger

Last Friday we celebrated the Solemnity of Mary's Assumption, body and soul, into heaven. The Son of God came into the world so that each of us might spend eternity, in heaven alongside her. Our Gospel this weekend, has Jesus heading up to Jerusalem teaching the multitudes along the way, a person from the crowd asks Him how many actually make it to heaven. Jesus' response is as relevant today as it was to his auditors 2000+ years ago.

"Lord, will only a few be saved?" the person asks. It seemed to be a question flowing from curiosity. Jesus did not come down from heaven to satisfy our curiosity. He came to Save Us and responded not by stating HOW MANY will be save, but HOW that interlocutor and others will be saved. ***Strive to enter through the narrow gate.***

Why, then do Jehovah's Witnesses insist that only 144,000 will be saved?

This number comes from the Book of Revelation which says that 12,000 people will be saved from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. But it's a mistake to take these numbers literally, for the very next verse describes 'a great multitude that no-one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language...

The actual number therefore isn't important, and Jesus doesn't yet know. What is important, Jesus states is how to get to heaven. He says we must try our best to enter through the narrow door, because one day it will be closed and then it will be too late.

Now, doorways are mentioned more than 270 times in the Bible, so which one is He talking about? Jesus tells in John 10:9 - *"I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved"*. He says in John 14: *"I am the truth and the life, no-one comes to the Father except through me"*.

So Jesus is the narrow doorway that leads to heaven, but what's that mean for us?

In 1999 I traveled to the Holy Land with some family and friends. One of the many great places we toured was the ancient Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, built on the spot where Jesus was said to been born. Originally, its door was huge, but after robbers invaded on horseback they walled it up. Now the front door is small (4ft x 2ft). Today it's called the *Door of Humility* and it gives us a sense of Jesus' narrow door.

Small children can easily walk through it, but if you're any taller you have to leave your pride and possessions outside and bend down to enter. You also can't just wander in casually, you have to focus on entering that doorway and only one person can enter at a time.

Jesus' doorway may be "squeezy" to get through at the start, but with its focus on unconditional love and forgiveness and worship, it opens up to a beautiful life of peace, love and joy (Psalm 18:10).

Isn't that what we're all looking for?