

BURNING BUSH NETWORK

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The Strait Gate, The Narrow Way

Burning Bush Media

Booklet12

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Introduction

The understanding of what Christ meant when He declared that ‘the way that leads to life is narrow’ and when He instructed the we should ‘strive to enter in at the strait gate’ - the understanding of these statements of the Lord is clearly consequential to the eternal future of our souls. Serious efforts should always be made to ensure that we are correct on matters of eternal consequence. Don't stake your soul on presumptions but make very, very certain that you are accurate in your understanding of biblical concepts that have eternal bearing. I intend in this writing to try and help the believer correctly view the statements the Lord made on the subject of in view.

Chapter 1

This Narrow Way

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matthew 7:13-14).

The Audience of Christ

Understanding the Lord's audience will help us understand whether the above passage is applicable to born-again Christians or exclusively to unregenerate sinners or to both. If it is applicable to us, what then does it mean or how to we apply these words to our daily lives? Matthew 7 is a continuation of the famous 'Sermon on the Mount,' which begins in Matthew 5, where it says in verses 1-2 that His

disciples (out of the present multitudes) came to Him and He taught them. Luke 6 indicates that the rest of the large crowd was at a listening distance or so. This means He was addressing especially His disciples. A disciple (Greek transliteration: mathētēs) is a learner or pupil. If you are a born again Christian you are a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ. Follower because you follow His leading and His teachings. At this point, His followers were just beginning their following. He tells them about two things: The gate and the way. That means there is a pathway that they were to walk on and there is a gate through which to access that pathway, and both are narrow. The word “strait” means narrow. The gate and the way represent two aspects:

1. Jesus Christ, for He said, 'I am the door' and 'I am the way...'
2. The beginning and the journey (practical experience) of the Christian life.

We know that there is only one gate and one way as is expressed elsewhere in Scripture. The narrowness means three possible things:

1. This has an individual aspect to it. You enter alone, no herd mentality.

2. Considering the difficulties ahead, it is not easy to enter at the gate and walk along this way. What makes the entrance narrow is the consideration of the difficulties that the Christian life comes with.

This is not just talking about the born-again experience through Jesus Christ, it is talking of the Christian life as a journey. We know that the way to heaven in Christ Jesus is a journey. It is a journey on a narrow path. We know it is a journey because the Lord Himself several times spoke of the qualifications that one needs to take into consideration before following Him. Oh! Yes, Jesus warned His to-be followers instead of excitedly and rashly welcoming them. He said to count the cost before following Him (Luke 14:28-32). Count the cost because:

- You are going to have to deny yourself and carry your cross daily in order to follow Jesus (Luke 9:23).
- You are going to have to very often deny yourself the favour and affection of even

very close relatives and friends (Luke 14:26).

- You are going to have to forsake all (Luke 14:33).

When a person came to Jesus and said “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus didn't say, “Good stuff, let's go for it.” No, He said, “Foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no where to lay His head.” You see that's what makes even the gate narrow, there are serious matters to consider before one even begins his journey on the way. Jesus wanted the fellow to understand that this is not going to be a smooth journey. Jesus Himself does not make it as easy as abc to follow Him. One must be sure this is what they want.

It is a way of wisdom

This narrow way requires one to be as wise as a serpent and as innocent as a dove (Matthew 10:16). The thought that you are walking on the narrow way to heaven must give Satan palpitations, and he is going to do everything in his power to get you off it. He is going to use serious tricks and painful trials to try and get you

back to the broad way that leadeth to destruction. The Lord said that He is sending us as sheep among wolves, and the weapons of survival are wisdom and innocence. Wisdom to maneuver through the difficulties and dangers caused by the wolves. At times, the wolves come in sheep's skin and you need wisdom to detect sinister motives. That means naivety is most likely to destroy you. A Christian ought not to be naive, especially in the days in which we live. The devil has unleashed all his power and tricks for his 'last kick of a dying horse.' He knows his time is short and he wants every single soul in hell, including the souls of born again Christians. Don't listen to Calvinists telling you that once you are saved you are automatically eternally secure and as such could never lose your salvation. There are numerous Bible passages that warn against backsliding and these are not empty threats. If we were eternally secure the Bible would be full of it, instead it is full of warnings to Christians. You would not need to be vigilant if you were automatically secure. If I am secure, why should I be vigilant and careful of the devil? (1Peter 5:8). Would I not have to be

a bit more relaxed knowing that no matter what Satan did I am 100% heaven bound? Personally, If I was a Calvinist I would 'eat and drink for tomorrow I die,' meaning I was going to relax all my way to heaven. But Calvinism is false.

It is a way of trials and temptations

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (James 1:2). The way is narrow and the powers of darkness consistently woo you with different kinds of pleasures. When pleasures don't work they throw persecution and all kinds painful difficulties. You must look unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2). You cannot afford to stop focusing on Christ and focus on your trials. In my experience, I have noticed that the aim of Satan with the numerous trials seems to be to make you forget Jesus and spend all your time worrying and trying to solve problems. By the time you come to, you are spiritually lukewarm. To stay on the narrow way, you ought to focus on Christ through prayer, fasting, studying the

Scriptures, even when surrounded by all kinds of storms and temptations. You need wisdom.

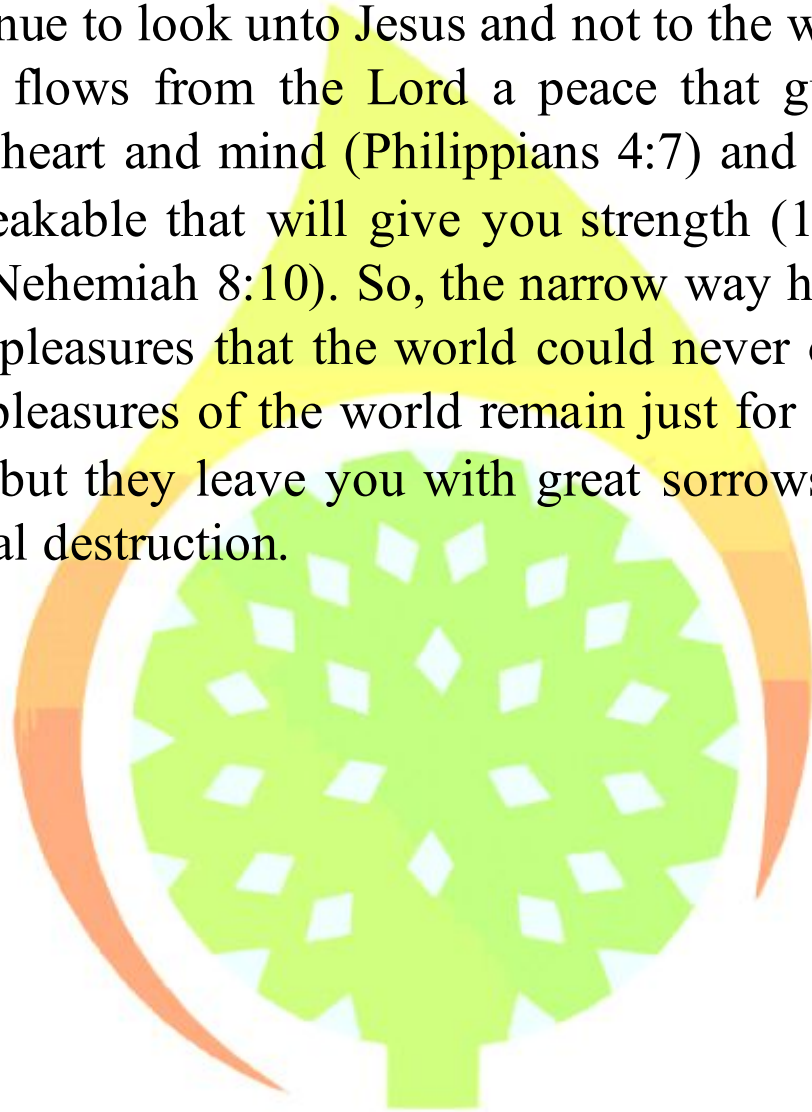
It is a way of the Word

The narrow way needs one to learn and know their Bible. *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path* (Psalms 119:105). You cannot walk here in human ingenuity, *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths* (Proverbs 3:5-6). Align your mind with the Word of God to remain on the narrow way (Romans 12:2). Let your worldview in every angle be permeated through and through with Scripture.

It is a way of joy and peace

Amidst the difficulties and tribulations of the narrow way, Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). The Lord Jesus said, *I have told you these things, that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation; but cheer up! I have overcome the world* (John 16:33). He further said, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I*

give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27). As long as you continue to look unto Jesus and not to the world, there flows from the Lord a peace that guards your heart and mind (Philippians 4:7) and a joy unspeakable that will give you strength (1Peter 1:8; Nehemiah 8:10). So, the narrow way has its holy pleasures that the world could never offer. The pleasures of the world remain just for some time but they leave you with great sorrows and eternal destruction.



Chapter 2

From the Narrow Way into the Narrow Gate

The two narrow gates

If you are a careful student of Scripture you will notice the seeming difference between the narrow gate of Luke 7:13-14 and that of Luke 13:24. The narrow gate of Luke 7:13 is similar to the “door” of John 10. This is the door or the gate to enter the Christian life and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The narrow gate of Luke 13:24 is not the gate to enter the Christian life or the Church but into heaven. *Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter in and will not be able* (Luke 13:24). We shall call these the “first gate” and the “second gate.”

When it comes to the first gate, Jesus simply says “enter in” but when it comes to the second gate He says, “strive to enter in.” In fact, the second gate is spoken of in the future tense. To become born again you don't strive, but the journey you take on the narrow way to heaven is a strive. To stay on the narrow way and not get off is indeed a serious strive. This is what Western theologians have dangerously misunderstood. They have taught the Church in Western Europe and North America that once one is a born again Christian they are literally entitled to heaven no matter what. In other words, nothing that you do or not do makes any difference in regard to you making it to heaven. They have misunderstood the nature or structure of salvation. For initial salvation (i.e being born again) you need nothing but to believe and confess Jesus Christ, but for entry into heaven you need sanctification by the blood of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit; unless you die immediately after getting saved. That is why Hebrews 12:14 says, *pursue peace with everyone, and holiness, for without it no one will see the Lord.*

How can you pursue what you already have? Furthermore, the word pursue in the Greek indicates aggression and vigorousness. You definitely are holy and perfect POSITIONALLY in Jesus Christ, but you must have a practical experience of that holiness, that's why the pursuit. Now the vigorous pursuit after perfect holiness by grace is what keeps you on the narrow way.

Consider the following sequence (You misunderstand Paul on grace and salvation you put your soul in danger, just like the Western Church and its theologians have):

1. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, BUT THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD (1Corinthians 7:19).
2. If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD (1Corinthians 7:19).
3. Blessed are they that DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in

through the gates into the city (Revelation 22:14).

The keeping of the COMMANDMENTS of the Lord does not save you before you are born again, it sustains your salvation after you are born again. The keeping of the commandments is a work of grace itself (EPHESIANS 2:10). In fact, faith is not simply mental assent, true biblical faith is the keeping of the commandments. So, obeying the Word of God is part of the whole spectrum of faith, works complete faith (James 2:22).

If you suppose that how you live has no impact on your entry into heaven, how would you interpret Revelation 22:14? Would you tell me that even those who don't obey God's Word are going to enter just because they are justified by faith? You say 'well, when a person is truly saved they are going to automatically want to live right. That is right, however that does not mean that the born-again experience violates the will and forces a person to live holy. Adam was perfect but he disobeyed God and brought death on us all. So, born again or being perfect does

not mean you unwillingly do what is right, no, you have to make a decision to pursue what the Holy Spirit puts in your heart to pursue: HOLINESS. Your single-minded pursuit after Jesus Christ and His holiness will keep you on the narrow way and this will ascertain your entry into the final narrow gate. That is how you strive to enter.

Many will seek to enter

Jesus said many will seek to enter but will not be able. When it comes to the first narrow gate, no one can be denied entry if they come in sincere faith (Isaiah 42:3). But when it comes to the second gate, my friend if you are found to be one of the five foolish virgins of Matthew 25 you will not be allowed to enter. That is why Paul put his body under subjection, that having preached to others he may not be a castaway (1Corinthians 9:27). And that is why he said that they labour that they may be accepted by Christ (2Corinthians 5:9). Peter said that the righteous are scarcely saved (1Peter 4:18). Can you see this, the Apostle Peter says the righteous are BARELY SAVED and the Western theologian

says all the righteous are automatically saved simply because they are born again. Someone will say that the righteous spoken of by Peter are just “good people,” as in “good sinners,” not born-again Christians. That would be very ignorant interpretation because the previous verse is talking of “judgement in the house of God.” Who is in the house of God? Is it not the righteous in Christ, the born-again Christians? Yes, they are the ones who are barely saved. Most of them go from church to hell. Why, because Hebrews 12:14 says without holiness no one will see the Lord, and most Christians don't take holiness seriously. They call it legalism. Ravenhill was right that whenever churches don't like something that is in the Bible they call it legalism, then prominent New Testament scholars come up with explanations for the church to side-step that demand of Scripture. For example, why are not modern Christian women not covering their heads during church or prayer? I have read the explanations by theologians and they are so pathetic you can't believe these are scholars. These are the kind of things that make the Church compromise the Word of God and

holiness. That is why the righteous are saved with difficulty. Meaning few of them enter the narrow gate of heaven. I mean Revelation 21:27 says that nothing that defiles shall enter that holy city but modern Christians are defiling themselves with the filth on TV in the name of grace. That is to receive the grace of God in vain. I'm warning you Christians, don't play with the holy God of Israel, you play with holiness at your own risk.

He that overcometh

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes won't be harmed by the second death (Revelation 2:11).

He who overcomes will be dressed in white, and I will not take his name from the book of life, and I will give witness to his name before my Father, and before his angels (Revelation 3:5).

What about he that fails to overcome? Calvinists say if you are truly saved you are automatically going to overcome, but Jesus said that the love of many shall grow cold (Matthew 24:12). Why would Jesus rebuke these churches in Revelation

and exhort them to repent if they were unconditionally secure? If the world overcomes you, the worms of hell will be your bed. That is why the Word of God says to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. If you get overcome by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life; if you get defeated by TV, fashion, worldly music, envyings, pride, etc. you are in serious trouble. If you are sincerely believing in Christ and His cross and praying consistently for victory, God is faithful, He will not disappoint.



Chapter 3

Behold, There Exists a False Narrow Way

Satan the faker

The devil is quite a foe. He is tricky, he knows how to fake things so well you can hardly tell the difference. I mean consider the case of the fortune telling girl who in Acts 16 followed Paul and company around declaring them servants of God. With the carnal eye, she was telling the truth, but it was a demon aiming at something. I've seen things where something looked so much like it was of God but there was another spirit behind. Satan is dangerous as a roaring lion, but he is probably most dangerous as an angel of light. It appears that he wants to fake everything of the Lord. Human beings in their eagerness for easy stuff love his fake things that look like the things of God. The true narrow way is too tough

on the flesh and people don't want things like that. People don't want to be told to dress modestly or to stop watching the junk on secular television, or to sacrifice for their neighbour, etc. So, they themselves, I propose with the help of the devil, have created in their hearts and minds a false narrow way. For *there is a way which seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death* (Proverbs 16:25). Many are walking with the help of preachers and theologians on their own way which seems right but is leading to death. That is why Paul said that with itching ears, the people will heap up teachers to themselves (2Timothy 4:3-4).

Christianity lite

This is that Christianity whereby people are not pursuing after holiness and the fruit of the Spirit but are relaxed in front of sports games, movies, video games and all kinds of stuff, no evangelizing, no serious praying, no fasting, no fear of the Lord, no modest dressing, all in the name of the cross and grace - that's the false narrow way. Here's one example of this fake narrow way: Jesus said we will account for our

idle words and by them we will be justified or condemned. The other day I get on social media and an American “prophet” has a post in which he is telling people that “because of your faith in the cross,” on Judgement Day you will be declared “justified” despite all the careless words you spoke. Then went on to say there is no need to fear. With that mentality, what is the point of Jesus' warning then, or of us taming our tongues, or of making sure no corrupt communication comes out of our mouths? What is even the point of asking for cleansing? We would ask for cleansing whenever we feel like it. Can't we be a little more careless since we are covered anyway? God is not mocked, if you are not with all your heart seeking after taming your tongue, He will not cover you. When Jesus says you will be condemned, then know that you will indeed be condemned. When you stumble you ought to immediately ask for forgiveness and cleansing, don't play with the Lord. The Bible says we should not tempt the Lord Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 10:9).

The road to Canaan

In Joshua 1, the Lord makes Joshua some powerful promises, telling him things like there would be no one able to stand before him and the likes. He promises Joshua vast amounts of the land of Canaan. This was in keeping with the promise the Lord had made to Abraham. But shall we please take note of the fact that the entry into Canaan was going to be a strive. With all those beautiful promises the children of Israel were going to have to fight for their entry into Canaan, even after a very difficult forty-year journey in a harrowing wilderness. From this you ought to learn O Christian that God is not going to spoil His children. There is not going to be any easy entry into heaven. You have to fight giants on your way there: The bad bad devil and his minions, the world, and the flesh. Oh! Yes, the devil is defeated, but he is not to be underestimated because he is not laying in some corner of hell licking his wounds in apathetic depression and lethargy. He is prowling around looking for whom to devour. If you are not

striving to enter heaven, you are deceiving yourself on the false narrow way and you have been captured. Satan has very good hooks to catch his fish. I came across a social media post in which an American preacher was telling folk that they don't lose their holiness even when they willfully sin. Boy imagine what that does to a heart that's been successfully trying to avoid getting into that muddy website. Why avoid any longer, why even pray day and night for holiness when you are 'once holy always holy?'

Most Christians

I am convinced considering the current spiritual climate that the majority of Christians are treading the false narrow way. Truth has always been carried upon the shoulders of the few and not the many, that has not changed. I hardly ever meet a Christian who is truly walking in the fear of the Lord and pursuing after holiness. Everybody knows that whoremongers, drunkards, pimps and prostitutes, drug dealers and users, wife abusers, child molesters, robbers, etc. are on the broad way to hell, but most Christians think they themselves are automatically on the narrow

way. Let me tell you that only those who DO the will of the Father will enter the Kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21). What is the will of the Father for the Christian to do? It is the whole of the New Testament plus whatever is applicable to Christians in the Old Testament. If you are picking and choosing according to your personal preferences and thus have turned the Word of God into a kind of 'choice assorted' entity, you are walking on the way of your own making, not in Jesus Christ the Way.

The gospel of “dreams”

The gospel of the false narrow way is consistently about you and your earthly endeavours. Instead of “pursue holiness,” it's about “pursue your dreams.” It is this and that about “your destiny.” Is there really time for earthly ambitions and aspirations at this late hour?

Romans 13:

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now, is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

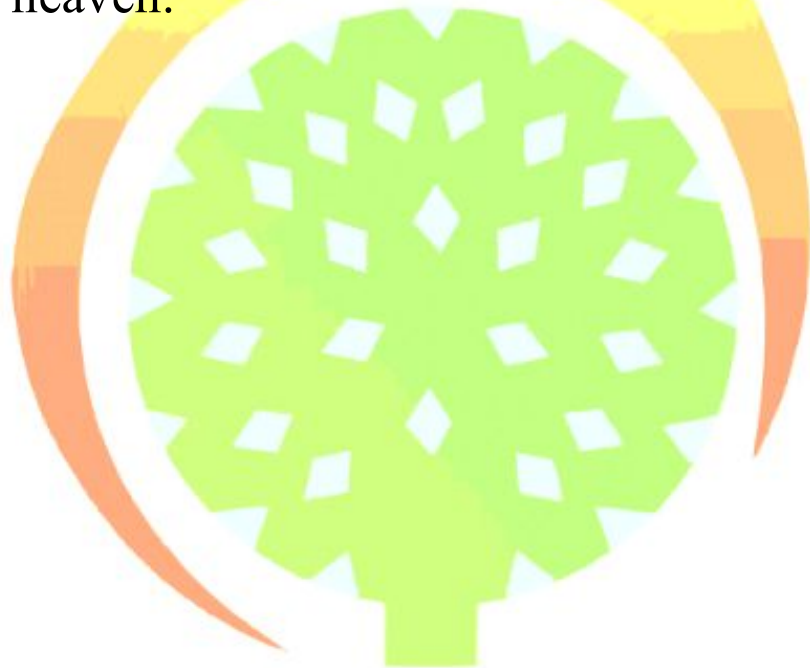
12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Due to the lateness of the hour the Word of God says that it is time for those who have wives to live as though they had none and so forth (2Corinthians 7:29-31). This being the urgency of the situation, where do we get the time to follow the things of the world? To follow fleshly dreams? Dreaming of becoming millionaires? If you have a dream, the dream must be from the Lord. Joseph's dream was from the Lord.

Brethren, let us walk as wise, not as fools, redeeming the time for it is short.

Conclusion

Evaluate yourself and let the Lord search your heart and help you ascertain whether you are indeed on His narrow way. Do not be presumptuous and pompous, humble yourself and let Him help you make sure. The narrow way is for those who are totally determined to make heaven.



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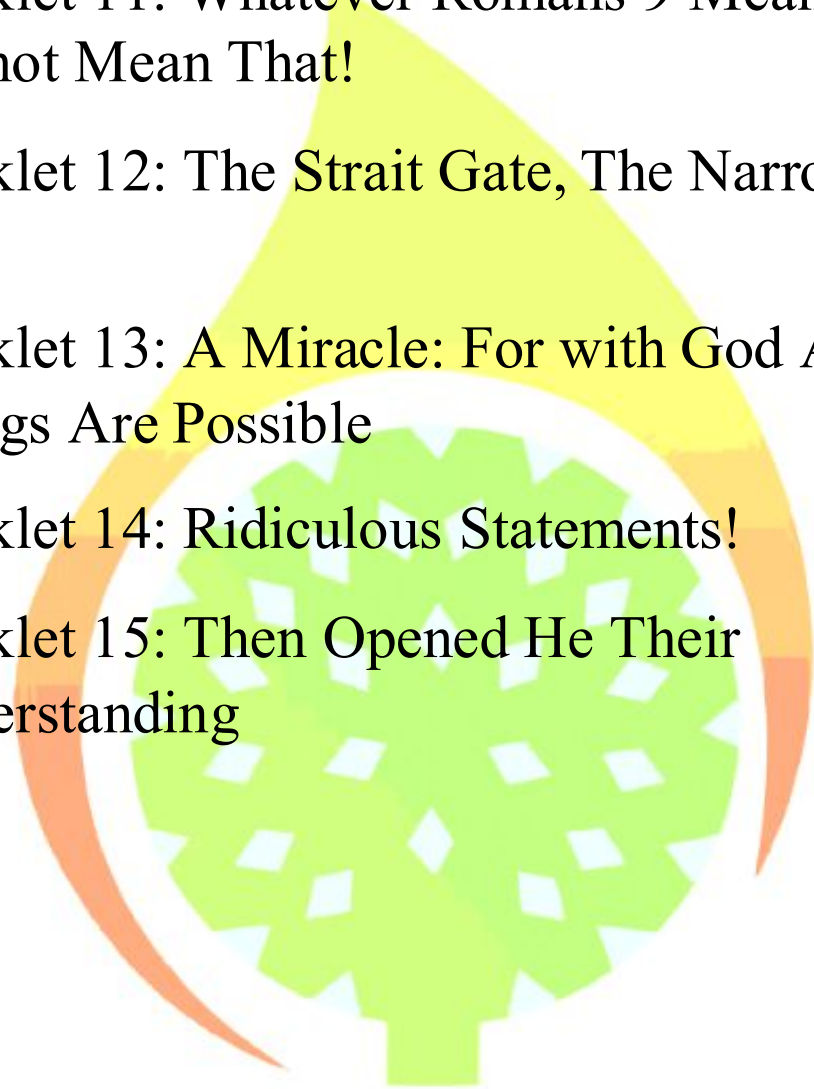
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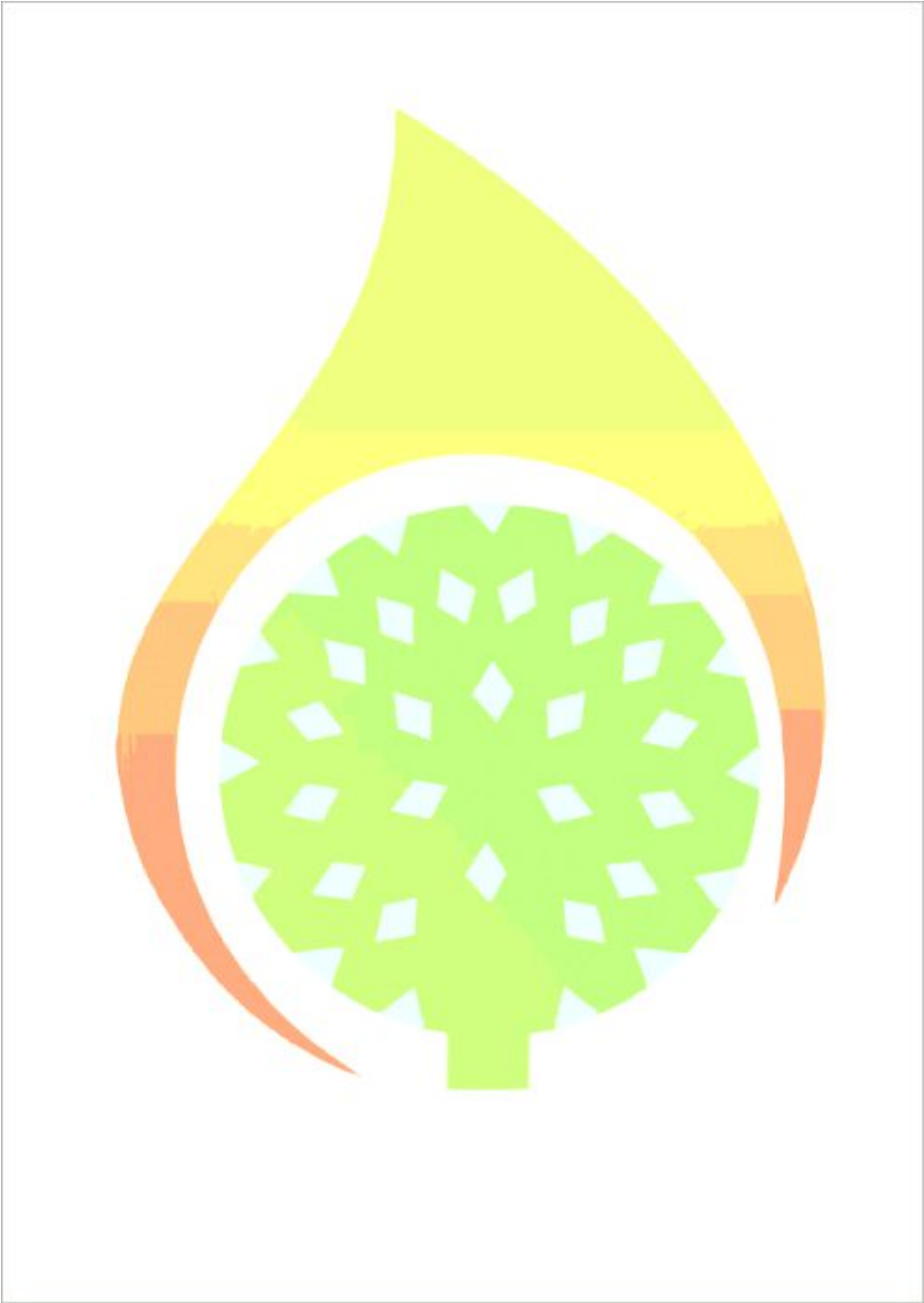
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