

THE NARROW WAY

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One criticism often leveled at the church of Christ is that “the church of Christ is too narrow-minded.” Of course, those who so criticize are using the term *narrow-minded* in a derogatory way. The opposite of being “narrow-minded” is to be “broad-minded.” By using the term “broad-minded” the world really means toleration of all views without condemning any.

Tolerance is the name of the same in today’s society. If being tolerant is politically correct, then our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was not politically correct. He exhorted:

“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 word *strait* means a narrow, restricted passage. God has always required man to strictly abide by His commandments but permissive society has the tendency to resist any restrictions. At the time Joshua succeeded Moses as Israel’s leader, the Lord said unto him,

“ONLY BE THOU STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS, THAT THOU MAYEST OBSERVE TO DO ACCORDING TO ALL THE LAW, WHICH MOSES MY SERVANT COMMANDED THEE: TURN NOT FROM IT TO THE RIGHT HAND OR TO THE LEFT, THAT THOU MIGHT PROSPER WHITHERSOEVER THOU GOEST. THIS BOOK OF LAW SHALL NOT DEPART OUT OF THY MOUTH; BUT THOU SHALT MEDITATE THEREIN DAY AND NIGHT, THAT THOU MAYEST OBSERVE TO DO ACCORDING TO ALL THAT IS WRITTEN THEREIN FOR THEN THOU SHALT MAKE THY WAY PROSPEROUS, AND THEN THOU SHALT HAVE GOOD SUCCESS.” (**Joshua 1:7-8**)

Notice that the Lord demanded Joshua and the children of Israel to observe all of His law given to them by Moses. They were not to deviate from it to the right or to the left.

Likewise, the Lord requires of us who live in the Christian dispensation to adhere strictly to the New Testament (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

The apostle Paul declared:

“ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE. THERE IS ONE BODY, AND ONE SPIRIT, EVEN AS YE ARE 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” (**Ephesians 4:3-6**).

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Within those verses, the word *one* appears seven times. *One* is an adjective used to qualify the number of each of the seven spiritual entities which it modifies. Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the truth that there is only one God? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one Lord? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one Spirit? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one hope of our calling? Is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one faith? Is it being “narrow minded” to contend for the one baptism? And is it being “narrow-minded” to uphold the Biblical truth that there is only one body?

The Scripture plainly teaches that there is only one of each of these seven spiritual entities. If that is what being “narrow-minded” means, then I acknowledge that I am indeed “narrow-minded”. But those who use the term *narrow-minded* in a derogatory way are being judgmental and do not appreciate our efforts to abide by a “thus saith the Lord.”