

God, but others were hardened and did not believe, and they "...spoke evil of **the Way before the multitude**" (Acts 19:8,9).

So people spoke evil of the Way when they rejected the preaching about the kingdom of God. The long-awaited kingdom was *The Way, the church.*

Paul said "But this I confess to you, that according to **the Way** which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers..." (Acts 24:14).

So Paul was a part of this Way, this body of people, who worshiped God in a distinct and recognizable manner.

Have you thought about this?

Jesus said that there is only one way that leads to life, and He is that Way. Early Christians who followed that Way were not popular. The doctrine they taught was not popular. They were hated and persecuted because they taught what their Lord had taught: that there are not *many* ways; there are not *many* acceptable religions; there are not *many* churches; there are not *many* ways in which we can be saved; there are not *many* ways to worship God.

Today, with the thousands of churches and doctrines in the world, the message of oneness so clearly identified in Scripture is met with the same rejection.

Christians and members of the church of Christ are accused of being bigots and judgmental. But neither we nor anyone else has the authority to change the message of Scripture:

Jesus said, "I will build **my church**..." (Matthew 16:18). Paul wrote, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit: "... **Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish**" (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Have you thought about this?

Jesus promised to return for **His church**, which is **His people, His kingdom, His bride** (Revelation 22:12; John 14:3; Matthew 25:31-46). *Is He returning for you?*

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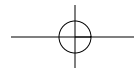
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Have you thought about this?

People minimize the church, saying that our focal point should be primarily Christ and the great sacrifice He made for us.

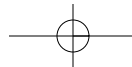
But in actuality, God's focal point is the church! In the stream of history, His goal was not the death of Christ, but what that death accomplished — the restoration of Himself to the souls of men.

This is the definition of the church: a body of humans restored to God. In this sense Christ, Himself, served the church, and His death was the means to the end God sought. No, we must not minimize the One who died to make life possible, but neither should we be guilty of minimizing the prize so precious to God...

How precious was the church to God?

He made the supreme sacrifice of His Son in order to obtain it for Himself!

(1 Corinthians 15:24)



Have you thought about this?

Every living human is traveling on a way. Physically, we are going from life to death. The way we have chosen may lead to spiritual life or it may end in spiritual death, but it is an inescapable fact that all of us are moving toward one destination or the other. It is imperative that we make informed decisions.

Which end will we reach?

Have you thought about this?

People, as a whole, think that there are thousands of ways we might travel. Our choice will determine whether we find life or death at the end of the way.

Will we follow the gods and rituals of some ancient religion? Will we choose cults and mysticism? Does the road of the majority appeal to us? Will our parents' choice be ours, too? Will we follow the religions begun by men? Will the nearest denomination satisfy us? Will we decide we are good enough, on our own merit, without any form of religion?

Have you thought about this?

The Bible says: *"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death"* (Proverbs 14:12). "

"Oh Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Jesus said, *"I am **the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me**"* (John 14:6). He explained further, *"I am **the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...**"* (John 10:9).

Jesus is the door to what? He answers, *"I am the door of the sheep... I am the good shepherd: and I know My sheep, and am known by my own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father: and I lay down My life for the Sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice: and there will be **one flock and one shepherd**"* (John 10:7,14-16).

Have you thought about this?

According to Jesus (John 10:7-16; 14:6),

- * How many Truths are there? **One**
- * How many Saviors are there? **One**
- * How many Doors are there? **One**
- * How many Shepherds are there? **One**
- * How many flocks are there? **One**
- * How many Ways to life are there? **One**

Have you thought about this?

Humans may tell themselves that there are many ways to God, and that they

are free to choose the way they like best, but Jesus, God's Son and our Savior, says there are *only two possible ways* on which any of us may travel— not the hundreds or thousands of pseudo ways that humans have devised — **only two**:

*"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"* (Matthew 7:13,14).

Have you thought about this?

In the New Testament, the strait and narrow way is identified as a body or group of people. Read with me: Saul asked letters of authority *"... so that if he found **any** who were of **the Way**, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem"* (Acts 9:2).

So, the people of the Way were literal, identifiable people who were being persecuted.

*"And about that time there arose a great commotion about **the Way**"* (Acts 19:23). In Ephesus, some of the people listened to Paul as he reasoned and persuaded concerning the things of the kingdom of

