

God's People Must Not Follow the Majority

(Exodus 23:2)

Introduction:

1. Recently, large groups of people have participated in destructive behavior.
2. In our lesson we are studying passages which teach that "God's people must not follow the majority," including:
 - a. several passages recorded in the Old Testament
 - b. several passages recorded in the New Testament
 - c. a story recorded in Daniel 3 that illustrates the point we are making.
3. Let us begin by examining some . . .

Discussion:

I. PASSAGES RECORDED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Paul showed in Romans 15:4 why we must consider the Old Testament.
- B. (Exodus 23:2a) Moses wrote, "*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.*"
 1. In the context, God was revealing His will to the Israelites through Moses.
 2. God told His people to do certain things and not to do certain things.
 3. In this verse God told His people not to follow a crowd to do "*evil.*"
 4. God wanted His people to obey His will, even if the majority disobeyed.
- C. Unfortunately, the Israelites disobeyed this command on a number of occasions.
 1. (Exodus 32:1-5) Aaron gave in to the majority and made the golden calf.
 - a. Aaron was Moses' brother, and he had seen God demonstrate His power.
 - b. He followed the crowd and violated the law Moses was receiving (20:4).
 2. (I Samuel 8:1-5) The Israelites demanded that Samuel make them a king so they could be "*like all the nations.*"
 - a. According to vs.7, God took this personally.
 - b. Even after Samuel protested, the Israelites demanded a king (vs.19-20a).
 - c. The Israelites finally realized they had sinned (I Samuel 12:19).
- D. The Old Testament shows us that "God's people must not follow the majority."
- E. Let us turn our attention to some . . .

II. PASSAGES RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. (Matthew 7:13-14) Jesus contrasted the eternal destinies of the "*few*" and the "*many.*"
 1. Jesus said that the majority will spend eternity in a place of "*destruction.*"
 2. Following the majority is not wise or safe.
- B. Realizing what Christians are will help us understand why we must not follow the majority.
 1. (Titus 2:14) Christians are a purified, "*peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

2. (I Peter 2:5) Christians are a *"holy priesthood."*
 3. (I Peter 2:9) Christians are *"a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people."*
- C. These passages teach that the Lord's people cannot be like everyone else and do what everyone else does with His approval.
1. The Lord's church is not a democracy -- it is God's kingdom.
 2. Christians do not determine right and wrong by what the majority might want.
 3. Christians determine right and wrong by what the King says in His Word.
- D. Finally, let us consider . . .
- III. A STORY RECORDED IN DANIEL 3 THAT ILLUSTRATES THE POINT WE ARE MAKING
- A. While the Jews were in captivity in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar the king made a great image of gold.
 - B. When the image was dedicated, a decree was made (vs.4-6).
 - C. The response of the majority of people is revealed in vs.7.
 - D. The Israelites had to make a decision.
 1. God said that worshipping idols was sinful (Exodus 20:3-5).
 2. If the Israelites obeyed God they would be cast into the furnace.
 3. If they followed the majority their lives would be spared, but they would have to answer to God for disobeying Him.
 - E. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow.
 - F. They were taken before the king, and he gave them another chance.
 - G. Their response is revealed in vs.16-18.
 - H. They were cast into the furnace, but the Lord delivered them (vs.26-27).
 - I. This made quite an impression on the king (vs.28-30).
 - J. Suppose these 3 young men had chosen to go along with the majority.
 1. They would have lost their souls.
 2. They would have missed out on a great opportunity to influence the king on behalf of God.

Conclusion:

1. The entire Bible shows that the majority does not determine what is right or wrong in religion.
2. Let us read again the Lord's words in Matthew 7:13-14.
3. Which path are you traveling?