



"It is better to walk alone than to walk with others going in the wrong direction."

THE MADNESS OF CROWDS

THE BABYLON MODEL

Over the years I've observed that people generally seek groups. The bigger the group the better. But why?

Some people seem to think that normalcy can be found only where people are in large numbers. Some think that the size of a group is evidence of correctness and that truth can't survive, nor can it be discovered, in atmospheres outside of large groups, whether it be in the arenas of politics, religion, or education. Being "politically correct" is equated with being secure.

The quintessential model for this mindset is seen in the Tower of Babel. This model, more than any other in history, has been used to exemplify centralized group-think.

People seem to follow the patterns of fish and birds. They are drawn to schools and flocks ... perhaps by instinct of survival. But I've watched schools of fish, and flocks of birds, that become huge, easy targets for bigger animals of prey. Thus, in similar manner, large groups of people become obvious targets for governmental infiltration, manipulation, corruption and steering in directions destructive to themselves. In most organized groups of political dissidents, as we've seen attacked by government agencies in the past, there are high percentages of government agents among the membership, posing as dissidents and reporting group activities back to the government.

This is true, as well, with so-called Christian groups that call themselves "churches." Most Christians are of the "let's all get together" mindset. I've examined my past thinking from years ago when I used to think along those lines. And I've considered possible motives of people who are still in that mode.

My conclusion is that we, at early ages, are programmed to think that there is some advantage, or possibly a mandate from God, to look to large groups for affirmation and "fellowship" ... and somehow accomplish something that cannot be done outside large groups.

For the purpose of this discussion I'm going to present my argument which is, in essence, the opposite of the

"centralized group" mentality. I don't accept the premise that there is "power in numbers." I tend to believe that large numbers of people have always been, not only trouble, but actually helpless and easily manipulated and turned against themselves. I see the fact that anytime the world has benefited from truths and better ideas it has been due to singular figures in history who stood against the tide of large groups. The epitome of my view centers around Jesus. Of course, other men, like Moses, John The Baptist, Christ's Apostles ... even others like Galileo, Copernicus, Tyndale, Wycliffe, Tesla, etc. come to mind as well. All these fought and innovated alone, and died alone. But their contribution to mankind still stands out above everything. These are real souls that cannot be destroyed.

LOOKING FOR GOD IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

"Why do you live way out there?"

People ask us this. We live in Idaho County, the largest county in Idaho. It is approximately the size of Connecticut, and has a population of 16,000, one stop light, and lots of rivers and mountains. We choose to live in a sparsely populated part of the country. We have our reasons. We choose this, not to get away from brethren, but for a quiet life and to avoid the oppression of the "madding crowds."

We treasure good fellowship. But we also treasure our solitude when we need it. We feel sorry for folks who live in circumstances where they cannot escape the masses to find peace and shed distractions when needed. We believe that everyone needs to have access to the quiet in order to consider thoughts given to them by Christ and to contemplate God's creation without man's interference.

I know ... this mindset may appear to contradict an assumed mandate to congregate into large groups ...

1. Now we beseech you, brethren, on behalf of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our coming together to Him,
(2 Thess. 2:1)

25. *Not forsaking the coming together of ourselves, as the custom of some; but standing by one another: ...*

Heb. 10:25.

In my opinion, these oft-quoted passages are misunderstood by most people. These are not mandates to gather into mass groups ... as if forming groups were somehow conducive to walking close to Jesus and understanding his teachings. In fact, the opposite is more likely the truth. Scripture tells us to *“come out from among them and be separate ... and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you,”* (2 Cor. 6:17).

So, if these passages are not commanding us to congregate into large groups, what are they teaching? Read correctly, they tell us to come into the fold of our Great Shepherd who calls us out from the madness of crowds. Taken as a whole, Scripture teaches us plainly that we are to fellowship with brethren ... but not with the ungodly.

3. *Can two walk together unless they are in agreement?*

Am. 2:3

2. *You shall not follow a multitude to do evil.*

Ex. 23:2

Most folks feel secure in large numbers, assuming that conformity equates to correctness. But Abraham had to leave the big city of Ur (Gen. 12:1). The Children of Israel had to leave Rameses, Egypt (Ex. 12:41). The followers of Christ had to leave Jerusalem and Rome (Acts 13:50; 2 Tim. 3:12). American pioneers had to leave Europe and Britain and settle in The New World to escape the corruption of powerful groups. Later, the East Coast was corrupted by the influx of bankers and politicians from Britain and Europe. The pioneers had to move again toward the west to get away from the corruption of the Eastern establishment.

These men heard the call to be separate. Moving westward was an answer for their day; a separation from the madding crowds. It worked for some time. My ancestors were pioneers. One of my forefathers moved west in Daniel Boone's company. Others continued farther west.

But now we can no longer escape the evil and the chaos by moving farther west. We've reached the end of "the west" ... so we must find other ways to be separate.

There are yet a few spots in America where population and government are sparse. These are great if you can eke out a living there. But for those who cannot manage this, they must find other ways to escape the crowds and find solitude and peace.

Those of us who seek to separate may be called "isolationists" or "survivalists" by those who don't hear the call. But whatever it takes, separation is a necessity for saints. After all, look at the word "saint." It is the Greek "*hagios*" meaning "separate." Saints are those who separate themselves from the Beast System. The English word, "holy" comes from the same Greek word.

Separating from the madding crowds does not mean separating from brethren. It is important that we develop the skill to know the difference between sheep and goats. In any

case, no matter how you slice it, an honest interpretation of Scripture does not suggest in any way that organizing groups, or living in heavy population, constitutes an advantage. In fact, the opposite is true. Living among the madding crowds tends to dissipate objectivity and common sense.

We are admonished to proclaim truth. Publishing truth to people is a good thing. It is what we are commissioned to do. But think about it. Taking a message to people does not imply joining or organizing large groups or movements. That is not a societal template for following Christ. And this is especially important to grasp when we live in a godless society as we do in this day and time.

Disciples of Christ have never fit in with man-made societies ... whether journeying through them, or trying to make a home there. The crowds around Jesus murdered Him. The apostles of Christ were eventually all martyred by crowds they were trying to help. Historically, godly men have always been persecuted and/or murdered by man-made groups and governments ... some of which actually thought they were doing the world a favor by killing saints.

People in groups (mobs like "democracies" - i.e., mob rule, political parties, lynch mobs, rioters, stampedes, etc.) tend to lose their common sense. No good comes from this. They follow ideas and models of people they don't even know. In democracies (i.e., majority rule) 49% of the people can be controlled by 51%. This is what ensues when people follow people instead of following Christ. And that is the problem. Following men instead of Jesus causes men's minds to lose functionality. The mind of man was created and designed by God to work in a certain way. When a mind stops looking to the Creator for guidance and instead looks to men and groups, insanity ensues. It causes thinking to go off track. This malady does not require large groups, but large groups do facilitate the process.

Given the choice of fellowship or isolation, I'd choose fellowship every time. But fellowship with groups does not bless us unless the group is built around Jesus and the Laws of God. Churchgoers, for example, tend to form groups built around themselves and pagan theologies. They follow false prophets and ignorant leaders. They are the blind leading the blind. Jesus said this about them:

14. *Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*

Mtt. 15:14

When men invent and organize governments and committees, they trap themselves into a state of wrong thinking. They form their organizations and then don't know what to do. Their leaders are as ignorant as the followers.

Not knowing what to do, they speculate. They make guesses based on the "cult of personality" ... i.e., they imitate what they see other groups and other "leaders" doing. These leaders are no more able to lead than the dummies who ask to be led. The myopic group then stumbles about blindly, investing great amounts of time and money attempting to prove they know what they are doing when, in fact, they are just confused and lost.

LIVING SEPARATE WHILE RESIDING IN BABYLON

How do we “*fear no evil*” while residing in “*the valley of the shadow of death*”? It must be stated that Jesus has provided the means for his sheep to exist among wolves. Clearly, one’s first reaction to wolves is to move somewhere that is not wolf territory. But today the wolves have invaded the whole country, and so we sheep must look more deeply into Christ’s teachings about survival among wolves.

28. *You should not be afraid of those killing the body, but are not able to be killing the soul: but rather you should be having fear of the one being able to destroy both soul and body in gehenna.*

Mtt. 10:28

“Gehenna” was the refuse dump outside Jerusalem. Things (and people) thrown into the Gehenna refuse dump were not only destroyed physically, but also lost from memory. The items thrown into Gehenna were considered worthless and not worthy of consideration.

This reference to “the soul” being destroyed in Gehenna represents a man’s life (not just his flesh) being destroyed. In other words, his deeds and the things he represented and stood for are destroyed ... like trash thrown away and forgotten.

Thus Jesus was instructing his disciples not to fear the loss of biological life. But rather fear the loss of your soul ... which means having your life ruined and compromised to the extent that you have stood for nothing and have been corrupted by the destroyers of human souls (i.e., false prophets, purveyors of corrupt religion, corrupt morals, corrupt politics, all of which destroy a man’s ability to stand for anything right and lasting).

Everyone dies biologically. But only those who stick close to Christ are able to leave a legacy of truth and strength that lives on after them. This kind of heritage strengthens those who remain. This man is remembered and honored long after his biological death. Witness men like Moses. He has been dead a long time, but his memory and legacy remains strong and continue to sustain and strengthen us even today. This kind of “soul,” as used in Greek New Testament terms, represents “that which we stand for.” If that is destroyed by the corruptors of the world, and if we live our lives standing for nothing, then we will have lived and died for nothing. In other words, our soul (our legacy) will have been destroyed.

Now you understand how a “soul” can be destroyed, and what it represents in terms of Greek usage in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the word translated “soul” is different. The word here is “nephesh,” which means “a breathing life form.”

So, taking the Greek definition of “soul” into consideration, let us look at the question of how we can “walk through the valley of the shadow of death” without fearing evil. How can we survive in Babylon without being corrupted and consumed by it and losing our souls? How can sheep find safe pasture in which to separate themselves and find

safety and solitude in wolf country?

15. *That you may be blameless and unadulterated, the children of God, unblemished, in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.*

Phil. 2:15

5. *Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.*

6. *In nothing be ambivalent, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

7. *And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

11. *... for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content.*

Phil. 4:5-7 & 11

5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.*

6. *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me.*

Heb. 13:5-6

2. *And he said, Yahweh is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;*

3. *The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; You save me from violence.*

2 Sam. 22:2-3

7. *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will revive me: you will stretch forth your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand shall save me.*

Ps. 138:7

4. *For Yahweh your God is He that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.*

Deut. 20:4

74. *That He would grant to us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear,*

75. *In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

Lk. 1:74-75

31. *... seek you the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added to you.*

32. *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

Lk. 12:31-32

7. *Show your marvellous loving kindness, O You that saves by your right hand them which put their trust in You from those that rise up against them.*

8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,*

9 *From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*

Ps. 17:7-9

34. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, and stones them that are sent to you; how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!*

Lk. 13:34

19. *How great is your goodness, that you have laid up for them that fear you; that you have wrought for them that seek refuge in you before the sons of men.*

20. *You will hide them in the secret of your presence from the conspiracies of man: you will keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues.*

Ps. 31:19-20

1. *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

2. *He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside the still waters.*

3. *He restores my soul: he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

4. *Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.*

Ps. 23:1-4

This array of scriptures from various sections of the Bible aptly display God's intention to provide protection for his people trapped in wicked societies. His first admonition is for us to separate ourselves from the wicked. But even when it is impossible for us to physically separate from them, God provides a way for us to be separate. He blinds those who would harm us. He hides us in plain sight so that our enemies don't notice us. He gives us peace and sanity in a mad world ... if we are willing to listen to Him. If we listen for his voice above the din of the madness around us, He speaks to us and gives us solace. If we pay attention to Him, He also reveals to us who are our enemies, and who are our brethren.

He gives us eyes to see, and ears to hear, so that we don't unwittingly walk into traps set for us by our enemies. Of course, it is essential that we learn to recognize who are our enemies in order to avoid them. The folks who have not learned to listen for God's guidance blindly walk right into the traps that have been set for those who are not vigilant and are gullible prey.

Learning how to remain unnoticed by our enemies is somewhat like learning how to stalk game in the woods. The trick is to spot them before they spot you. That requires skill

and cunning. It means we must practice and become good at functioning in hostile environments. We must be "wise as serpents." That includes knowing when to talk and when to shut up.

I understand that 90% of God's protection for us is in teaching us how to discern who our enemies are and how to remain invisible to them. In other words, stop being foolish and exposing yourself to those who want to hurt you.

There are also those who think they can confront big enemies by acting foolishly and then expect God to run to their rescue. It isn't smart to poke a big bear with a pointed stick and then expect God to protect you from the bear.

One of the temptations thrown at Jesus by the "devil," in Matthew 4, was to throw Himself down from a high wall to force God to come to his rescue. Jesus refused to put God to the test. He said "You shall not tempt the Lord."

This is very true also for us today. We live in a society that is, figuratively, like standing on a high wall. If we don't watch our step (i.e., use wisdom in how we conduct our lives), we can fall off that wall and hurt ourselves. God gives us instruction on how to traverse the high wall without falling. Therefore, it is imperative that we pay close attention to His guidance, for sometimes the wall on which we walk can become precariously narrow. If we are careless we can fall off and find ourselves in the hands of unfriendly agents of the Beast System.

TRUTH VS. GROUPS

Those who are blessed with the ability to seek and find the face of God are always going to stand away from groups. It is the nature of the problem of mankind. I point these things out to you in order to convince you that instead of fretting that you don't have a group around you to affirm and assure you that you are in the right, you should be rejoicing and standing firm and tall ... thankful for the immeasurable treasure you have been given. You don't need approval from a group. Group approval means NOTHING! It means that fools approve of you. Think on that for a while.

God's children have always been a remnant.

7. *Yahweh did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people:*

Dt. 7:7

27. *Isaiah also cries concerning Israel, Though the number of the Children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:*

5. *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

Ro 9:27, & 11:5

BE A PIONEER

Stand tall, stand alone if need be, and stand secure in Christ!

Ben Williams

WWW.BENWILLIAMSIBRARY.COM