

“Group Think” Not Unique to Our Time

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Refraining from expressing doubts and judgments, when these disagree with a growing consensus, only encourages what is referred to as “group think”. This trend becomes more effective when large groups with strong opinions rally support from various sectors of society including politicians, media, and celebrities. It doesn’t matter whether their cause is misguided because if they are well organized, persistent, and loud, they will eventually sway public opinion in their favor. As we will see, this is not a new phenomenon.

In this study we will examine a case of “group think” that was not only misguided, but harmful to the well-being of many people. It involves the nephew of Abraham; whose name was Lot. Because Abraham and Lot were blessed with large flocks and herds, and the land they migrated to was not large enough to support all the animals, they had to separate.

Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. ⁷And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock... (Gen. 13:6-7a; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

So Abraham took the initiative and offered Lot the “first choice” of land for his livestock.

So Abram said to Lot, “Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left,

then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.” (Gen. 13:8-9)

Lot decided to move to the plain of Jordan because it was well watered and fertile.

And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. ¹¹Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other (Gen. 13:10-11).

Apparently, this productive land allowed the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah to acquire wealth that made them a target for nations that were around them. Consequently, a battle took place that ended with the capture of all the valuables in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Then **they** (a confederation of four kings; cf. Gen. 14:1) **took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions**, and went their way. ¹²They also took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed (Gen. 14:11-12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

To make a long story short, Abraham intervened to defeat the four kings who attacked Sodom and Gomorrah, but he refused to accept any reward from the king of Sodom.

Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself” (Gen. 14:21).

But Abraham said,

.... I have lifted my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal

strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours...." (Gen. 14:22b -23a).

So Sodom and Gomorrah could now continue to prosper but, as recorded in history, many affluent civilizations have slowly descended into various forms of depravity, leading to a breakdown of law and order, followed by conquest and/or destruction. One of these trends, aimed at the breakdown of the family unit, is already occurring today in some of this world's most affluent nations. In an article published by the Pew Research Center (June 4, 2013) entitled, "The Global Divide on Homosexuality – Greater Acceptance in More Secular and Affluent Countries", it states.

As the United States and other countries grapple with the issue of same-sex marriage, a new Pew Research Center survey finds huge variance by region on the broader question of whether homosexuality should be accepted or rejected by society. The survey of 39 countries finds broad acceptance of homosexuality in North America, the European Union, and Latin America, but equally widespread rejection in predominantly Muslim nations, and in Africa, as well as in parts of Asia and in Russia.

So a connection between the affluence of Sodom and Gomorrah, and their depravity, should not come as a surprise and, as scripture confirms, there was a powerful "group think" associated with their perverted lifestyle. If anyone were brave enough to disagree with it, they were quickly threatened and intimidated. After all, if you can silence any opposition, you have won the battle. According to scripture, everyone in Sodom and Gomorrah went along with this, including those in charge of law enforcement. How do we know? Because those in charge of enforcing the law either stood by, or actively participated in an attack against Lot, his guests, and his family.

Now before they (Lot, some of his family, and two angels; cf. Gen. 19:1) lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, **all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.** ⁵And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally (have sexual intercourse; forcibly rape) (Gen. 19:4-5; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

When Lot refused to cooperate, those who subscribed to the "group think of the day" began to threaten him.

And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to sojourn (reside temporarily), and **he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.**" So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door (Gen. 19:9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In the United States, those who do not comply with the latest "group think" have experienced angry people pressuring them to leave restaurants, spitting at them, throwing objects at them, and even physically attacking them in various public locations. Therefore, if the scenario in Genesis 19:9 seems very unlikely to occur in our enlightened age, think again, because it is only a matter of time before similar things happen.

But know this, that **in the last days perilous times will come:** ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, **without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,** ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power.. (2Tim. 3:1-5b; emphasis added).

Continuing with the subject of "affluence", Almighty God cautioned the ancient nation of Israel not to forget His law and commandments once they became affluent and successful.

Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and his statutes which I command you today, ¹²lest – when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; ¹³and when your herds and your flock multiply, and your silver and your gold are increased, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴when your heart is lifted up (becomes proud), and you forget the Lord your God.... (Dt. 8:11-14a; Ed. note in parenthesis).



...FOR ALL YOUR COMMANDMENTS ARE
RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Psalms 119:172b

Sadly today, nations that once recognized the importance of God's law, now ignore it or twist what it says to suit whatever agenda they are promoting. Consequently, those who subscribe to "group think" will rarely be influenced by what God says regarding their point of view.

And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge**, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, greed, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; ³²who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them (Rom. 1:28-32; emphasis added).

In fact, the Bible can now be regarded as a form of hate literature when it is used as a support against any amoral form of "group think",

Lorna Dueck, a Christian broadcaster and author, wrote in the Globe and Mail (Canadian newspaper), "Bill C-250 says that moral views, motivated by religious text, can be equated with hatred. Thus, if church teachings refer to homosexuality as brokenness or sin (as in, missing the ideal), it could be charged as being hate propaganda."

Because Almighty God foreknew that this generation would not retain His law and commandments, He had Isaiah issue a prophecy which is clearly unfolding now.

Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for **the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden** (Isa. 29:14; emphasis added).

The wise men of previous generations understood "cause and effect", but those who claim to be wise today have lost this connection, especially when it comes to determining what is righteous and unrighteous at a time when our global problems are increasing exponentially.

.... For all Your commandments are righteousness (Ps. 119:172b).

The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever (Ps. 119:160).

Also, many of the former great leaders of this world did not make decisions based on the current "group think" of their time. Instead, they would often make tough decisions under pressure from those who thought they knew

better. Now, God is allowing the most inexperienced people to enter positions of authority and leadership, which will compound our problems.

I will give children (boys) to be their princes, and babes (capricious ones; undisciplined) shall rule over them (Isa. 3:4; Ed. notes in parentheses).

This selfish, immature, and inexperienced leadership will eventually lead to a complete breakdown of law and order, as occurred in Sodom and Gomorrah.

The people will be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable (Isa. 3:5).

At this point, people will begin to lose their mental equilibrium because they will not be able to reconcile what is happening. They will be blind, figuratively speaking, because they will not be able to see what is right and wrong anymore, just as occurred following ancient Israel's rebellion against God's word.

The Lord will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart (Dt. 28:28).

Unlike the five stages of grief that end with "acceptance" following a major trauma that has occurred (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance), mankind will not be able to reach any "acceptance". Instead, they will be searching for answers that will no longer be available at this point in man's history.

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, "That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. ¹²They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; **they shall run to and fro. Seeking the word**

of the Lord, but shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12; emphasis added).

Again, this situation can begin when various forms of "group think" replace God's law and commandments as the source of moral authority. When this occurs, mankind will have reached the point where respect for God has virtually ended.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but **fools despise wisdom and instruction** (Prov. 1:7; cf. Ps. 111:10; emphasis added).



THE LORD WILL STRIKE YOU WITH
MADNESS AND BLINDNESS AND
CONFUSION OF HEART.

Deuteronomy 28:28

It is critical that we examine any "group think" before it takes hold and unduly influences us against God's value system, as summarized by His law and commandments. Questions need to be asked regarding how any "group think" stacks up to God's word. This is the litmus test that can expose any fraudulent "cause."

Basic decency and common sense do not apply when any form of amoral "group think" takes root in society. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, the fact that Lot's uncle Abraham had saved these cities from captivity, and/or destruction, was not acknowledged when the whole city of Sodom ganged up to rape and pillage Lot, his family, and two angels sent by God. Even before this traumatic event occurred, Lot was under continual pressure from the citywide "group think" of his day.

.... (God) condemned them (cities of Sodom and Gomorrah) to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷and delivered righteous **Lot**, who **was**

oppressed with the filthy conduct of the wicked; ⁸for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds (2Pet. 2:6b – 8; Ed. Notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Even though God was very patient with these rebellious cities, He finally acted because they were misinterpreting His patience as "a license to continue disobeying". They acted as if He didn't exist, or He didn't see what they were doing, or that He didn't care.

Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; they say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?" ¹⁶Surely you (mankind as a whole) have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; for shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? (Isa. 29:16; Ed. Note in parenthesis).

In conclusion, various agendas are being "pushed" today, and some very aggressively. That alone should raise suspicion because if a cause is "just, good, or praiseworthy" people should want it. However, upon closer examination many of the "group think" proponents do not have just causes. Instead, their so-called moral authority on issues is just a disguise because they are in fact against God's law in one way or another. This is reason enough to "never underestimate the power of amoral people in large groups".

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