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THEOCRACY or DEMOCRACY *How Do You Vote?*

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The French statesman, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) came to America to see what a great republic was like. He was stunned by how great it was. In 1835 he went back to France and wrote his now famous and oft-quoted book, *Democracy In America*. It remains the best explanation of America's form of government ever written. Let me briefly tell you what it says, then make a spiritual application for us today.

The vast majority of Americans think that our system of government is a strict democracy. That is, the majority rules. Almost no one today, especially those 30 and younger, understands basic civics. Few seem to know that America is a republic, meaning a representative form of government. It is not a pure democracy (Greek ***demokratia*** – *demos* ("people"), *kratos* ("rule")). We elect by majority our representatives to go to city hall, the state capitol, or to Washington D.C. They, in turn, make our laws, then vote to pass or reject them after much deliberation. The concept is genius.

A purely democratic form of government leads to a roller coaster of emotions, often ending in mob rule. For example, the ancient city-state of Athens, Greece was a purely democratic government. They would gather as citizens in a public square to vote on the hot topic of the day. The orator who spoke the most passionately, and eloquently, could work the crowd into a frenzy, and then immediately call for a vote to pass legislation.

For instance, their famous philosopher Socrates was denounced as a "heretic" one day after a passionate speech, then immediately forced to drink hemlock (poison) to kill himself. Just days later, realizing their haste, that same crowd voted to erect statues of him for public display as a hero. Go figure. Pure democracy (i.e. majority rule), like Athens, leads to momentary passion often throwing out tempered reason and logic. A fickle crowd, provoked by loud leaders, often becomes mob rule.

I'm thinking, and you might be too, "*Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Give us Barabbas!*"

Take a moment and think through the Scriptures with me. When was the majority rule ever the wise choice? Start in the Garden of Eden and move down the timeline of Biblical history.

The entire population of the earth was wrong when Adam and Eve voted for Satan over God as their new leader. Today we call 100% a landslide election.

99.9% of the votes cast in the pre-flood world of Noah were wrong, dead wrong! The ballots showed 8 for Noah; thousands (millions?) for Satan (Gen. 6:5).

The only votes Moses received in the polling at Kadesh-Barnea were from Joshua and Caleb. All of Israel said, "*Let us select a leader and return to Egypt! ... And all the congregation said to stone them with stones!*" (Num. 14:1-10). Paul commented on Israel's generation after the exodus: "*Nevertheless, God was not well-pleased with most of them, for they were scattered along the ground in the wilderness*" (1 Cor. 10:5).

In the last days of the Judges, *“**all** the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said... Give us a king like all the nations around us!”* God saw the polling numbers and said, *“Heed the voice of the people; they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them”* (1 Sam. 8:4-7).

At *“The Mount Carmel Challenge,”* there stood 850 prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth against the one prophet of God. Elijah gave his stump speech, ending with these words, *“How long are you going to vacillate between two opinions. If the Lord is God, follow Him. If Baal is god, follow him”* (1 Kgs. 18:21). He then said to the prophets, *“You go first, for you are the **majority**”* (18:25 ESV). That evening a lightning bolt helped them see the light. Again, the majority were wrong. Dead wrong! Do you see a trend?

While the great multitudes of Jews swarmed to Jesus during the first year of His ministry, enjoying the stories, receiving miracles, and eating free lunches, it didn't take much to turn them into an angry crowd when His sermons started stepping on toes. *“**Many** of His disciples turned and walked no more with Him”* (Jn. 6:66).

The most famous example of democracy at work is one week before Passover. Jesus was ushered into the Temple in Jerusalem as a reigning monarch, with shouts of *“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!”* (Jn. 12:13) Just days later, this same crowd was provoked by its leaders to scream, *“Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him! ... We have no king but Caesar!”* (Jn. 19:14-15). Majority rule often turns to mob rule.

This leads us to the obvious application for our own lives. Moses told Israel at Mt. Sinai, *“You are not to follow the **majority** in doing wrong”* (Exo. 23:2). God knew well the fickleness of following the majority.

It is little wonder God chose Theocracy (God-rule), not democracy (people-rule), as His kingdom's government. King Jesus said, *“**All authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”* (Matt. 28:18). In our post-modern world that uses peer-pressure and polling to determine what is right and wrong, we have become a ship at sea without a rudder, *“tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men”* (Eph. 4:14).

Jesus reminded us, *“Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it”* (Matt. 7:14). He followed that sobering thought up with these words, *“**Many** will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord... and then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”* (Matt. 7:22-23). At judgment, the majority will not rule the day, but rue-the-day (i.e. “bitterly regret”) they rejected Christ.

My dear brothers and sisters, please apply this to the issues of our day. The polls say practicing homosexuality is lawful. There is growing consensus that same-sex marriage is right. It is widely held that abortion should be legal. The masses believe divorce for any cause is okay. The popularity of sex outside of marriage is rising in most surveys. Dressing immodestly (sexually) to attract attention is seen in every store, mall or mass media outlet, for sex sales!

But what do you say to all these trends and poll numbers? Christ calls us to *“become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”* (Phil. 2:15). Is your light shining?

I am for Theocracy, not democracy. How do you vote?