Popularity Contest

Prepared By Nathan L Morrison For Sunday February 24th, 2019

Text: Mt. 7:13-14

# Intro

1. Society (in general) has the attitude that if a thing is popular it must be right!
   1. Seen in changes to comic book heroes (Spiderman – 2008, Superman – 2011, etc.)
      1. An article (<http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/43316213/ns/today-books/t/clark-kent-lois-lanes-marriage-rocks/>) says, “Younger, modern crowds find married superheroes not as cool as single ones” so DC comics changed their heroes across the board in an event called The New 52 – marriages removed.
      2. It worked for Marvel Comics in 2008 – removed marriages of many heroes!
   2. Seen in books & movies depicting religious themes (Da Vinci Code by John Brown, etc.)
   3. Seen in attitudes towards the family (books, movies, TV, etc.) – not cool to be married!
   4. Seen in political realm
2. Changes are made by for-profit companies based on making money off the popular choice, and by their chosen demographic: younger, modern audiences, etc.
   1. Products created or changed based on sales and popularity.
3. Religious world sometimes adopts these practices: forsaking the “old paths” *(Jer. 6:16)* they go for something “cooler,” “more modern” to attract crowds and bring people in.
4. The word of God has never been decided by sales, or by popular vote!
5. Morality and the path of righteousness are not for sale, nor will win the popularity contest!
   1. Mt. 7:13-14: Jesus said the road was narrow that leads to life, and few will find it.
6. Someone or something may win the “Popularity Contest” but doesn’t mean they are right!

## Popularity Contestants

* 1. Rehoboam – II Chr. 10:6-14
     1. As king, was asked to lighten the load imposed on the people by his father King Solomon.
     2. Consulted with elders (Job 8:8-10; 12:12) – told to please the people and they will love him: popular with people.
     3. Consulted with young men of his youth – told to be harsher than his father: popular with friends.
     4. He chose to be popular with his friends and treated the people harshly!
  2. Jeroboam – I Kings 12:25-33

1. Afraid of losing his position as king over Israel so changed the religion: popular with the people.
   1. Object of worship (I Kings 12:28): Two Golden Calves.
   2. Place of worship (I Kings 12:29): Bethel & Dan
   3. Leaders of worship (I Kings 12:31): From among ALL the people who were not Levis.
   4. Time of worship (I Kings 12:32-33): Eighth month on the fifteenth day.
2. Became popular with the people in that they were willing to fight against Judah for him.
   1. II Chr. 13:1-3: Jeroboam’s army outnumbered Abijah’s (son of Rehoboam) 2 to 1.
3. He chose popularity with the people over obeying God, who made him king! *(I Kings 14:7-10)*

## Pilate – Mk. 15:6-15

1. “Wishing to satisfy the crowd” (15:15): Popular with the Jewish lynch mob.
2. Pilate scourged Jesus and handed him over to be crucified, after letting Barabbas, a murderer (Mk. 15:7), go!
3. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent *(Jn. 18:38; 19:4-6)*, but he chose popularity with the Jews over justice!
   1. These individuals were willing to change what they knew to be right to win the popularity contest!

## Popularity Consequences

1. Rehoboam – II Chr. 10:15-19
   * 1. He gained popularity with his friends, but lost the people!
     2. There was a civil war and the kingdom was divided, ten tribes to the north, Judah to the south.
     3. He is remembered for losing the United kingdom, just as God said he would! *(I Kings 11:29-39)*
2. Jeroboam – II Chr. 13:4-12
3. His religious changes brought him to war upon the house of David in Judah.
4. King Abijah (son of Rehoboam) rebuked him for:
   1. Rebellion – II Chr. 13:6-8
   2. Trusting in strength of numbers (relying on popularity) – II Chr. 13:3, 8
   3. Serving false gods: the two golden calves – II Chr. 13:8
   4. Appointing false priests (false ministers of God) – II Chr. 13:9
5. King Abijah reminded him that Judah had not departed from God (holding to the “old paths”):
   1. Judah served the one, true God – II Chr. 13:10
   2. Judah had true priests ministering to God – II Chr. 13:10
   3. Judah was performing true service to God – II Chr. 13:11
   4. Judah had true faith in God – II Chr. 13:12
6. For Jeroboam’s rebellion against God, he was defeated at the hands of King Abijah, his army routed, and the Lord struck Jeroboam that he died – *II Chr. 13:13-20*
7. His house was destroyed and all descendants cut off – *I Kings 14:7-16; 15:27-30*
8. He will always be remembered as the man that caused Israel to sin and be destroyed, never to return as a nation! (*II Kings 17:20-23)*

## Pilate (26-36 AD) – Jn. 19:19-22

1. Though he satisfied the mob in handing over Jesus to be crucified, he couldn’t please everyone!
2. The leaders were upset with him over the sign above Jesus’ head: ‘The King of the Jews’
3. His popularity with the Jews didn’t last long – he already had two strikes against him from complaints to Caesar Tiberius (14-37 AD) from the Jews. [*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontius\_pilate*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontius_pilate)
   1. Josephus tells us of a bloody encounter with Samaritans not long after Jesus’ trial. The Samaritans lodged a complaint and the Roman Governor Vitellius, of Syria, deposed Pilate and sent him to Caesar. He arrived just after Tiberius’ death and answered to Caligula (37-41 AD) for his conduct.
   2. The 10th century historian Agapius of Hierapolis, in his Universal History, says that Pilate, after being exiled to Gaul, committed suicide during the first year of Caligula's reign (37/38 AD). Eusebius says it was in Vienne (SE France).
4. He will always be remembered as the man who gave in to his cowardice and compromised justice to conform to the will of the people!
5. These individuals, to win the popularity contest, lost the moral/faithfulness test before God!

## Conclusion

1. Just because something/someone is popular, it doesn’t mean it is right or right thing to do!
   1. I Chr. 13:1-4: David’s plan to move the ark was popular with all people, inlcuding the priests and Levites, but its outcome resulted in the death of Uzza (I Chr. 13:9-10).
2. Also, changing for the sake of popularity (young, modern crowd) doesn’t mean their tastes are right (Rehoboam’s friends, Jewish lynch mob).
   1. Comic book writers thinking writing about married couples no longer “fresh” and “popular” so started over many storylines to present younger heroes! (Marvel & DC)
   2. Denominations constantly seek “fresh, more modern” ways of drawing in younger crowds.
   3. Maybe the younger crowd’s attitudes/perceptions are wrong and need to be told as such!
3. Conforming to the world *(political agendas)* to please it is never the right course, for it is fickle as to what it wants in the first place! (Look at fashions and “it” designs at different decades)
   1. Rom. 12:1-2: God says not to conform to the world, but conform to His son (Rom. 8:29).
4. You may not always please the crowd or win the popularity contest, but in remaining faithful to God you will win the crown of life (II Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:10).
5. The majority, those on the broad road that leads to destruction *(Mt. 7:13-14),* are in rebellion to God and they will only find retribution (II Thess. 1:7-10).
6. Let us not seek to win the “popularity contest” but seek to obey God and conform to His Son!
7. If not a Christian, you are in rebellion and subject to His Judgment. Repent and be baptized!
8. If a Christian with unrepented sin, you too are in rebellion. Repent and be renewed.
9. Whatever your requests may be, let them be known ***NOW*** while we stand and sing.