

STAY WITH THE SAVIOR OF THE SCRIPTURES

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In the sermon on the mount Jesus introduced the concept that the way of salvation would not be crowded. He said, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:13-14). Yet, down through the ages and up to the present moment people seem to follow the crowd irrespective of any other considerations, doctrinal or moral.

A study of the three and a half year ministry of Jesus Christ yields the observation that there were those who followed him because of what they wanted and not because of what the Savior wanted. For example, at Capernaum the Lord replied to the people’s question, “Rabbi, when camest thou hither?” with, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed” (John 6:26-27). After Jesus revealed his will and purpose, John wrote, “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him,” (v. 66).

A lesson from the night of Jesus’ betrayal will motivate a desire to “stay with the Savior of the scriptures.” At Gethsemane, the scene unfolds along four fronts. First, the Savior is alone praying. In Matthew 26:36 it is written, “Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.” Second, the three disciples were taken with him on into the garden where he prayed. Matthew revealed, “And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy” (v. 37). Closest to Jesus were Peter, James, and John. Third, the eight disciples were told by the Lord to “sit ye here” (v. 36). And, fourth, a large, armed multitude were coming out to arrest Jesus. Matthew wrote, “And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people” (v. 47).

So, first there was the Lord alone. He was praying. Second, there were the three disciples. They were sleeping. Third, there were the eight disciples. They were waiting. And, fourth, there was the murderous mob. They were approaching.

The lesson is the further away you get from the Lord the greater may be the crowd. The application of the lesson surely must include the light this lesson shines on the problem with popularity. On one occasion the Lord cautioned, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26).

While the apostle Paul is one of the greatest of New Testament characters and greatly admired, the words he penned toward his impending demise grip the soul. He said, "Only Luke is with me" (II Tim. 4:11). Those who would long to remain faithful as Christians must develop the cohesion to Christ Paul had even against all odds. In order to be acceptable to Christ one simply must "stay with the Savior of the scriptures."