

Descent Into Madness

"*The LORD shall smite thee with madness*" - Deuteronomy 28:28a

Deuteronomy 28 outlines the blessings that God will bring on a nation that heeds his Word, and it also brings out the many curses that God will bring on a nation that forsakes his Word and rebels against him. One of the curses is **madness!** The Hebrew has it as **שִׁגְגָּאִים** which in the English is *shiggaion*. When translating it into English *shiggaion* means madness, a mentally deteriorating condition.

There is a psychological concept known as **communicated insanity**, or in the French as **folie à deux**, which means the madness of the two, or three, or four, or **folie en famille** – the madness of a family, or **folie à plusieurs** – the madness of many. This is where negative emotions and concepts are communicated to other people, who in turn pick them up and communicate them to other people. It starts with 2 people, then 3, 4, or more, whole families can be infected by it, until it can sweep through a village or nation, which we are presently seeing going on in America today. It is a mental illness originating in the emotional complex of the soul.

Some of the characteristics of **folie a deux** are: it is a bonafide mental illness, it is caused by the emotions running havoc over the soul, it is like a virus in that these negative emotions are contagious, one does not have to be, though, in direct physical contact to get it, it can be spread through word or print, it spreads faster than a virus, it can infect a whole village, or city in a day, irrational behavior even violence will accompany it, one now becomes incapable of rational thought, and if it doesn't "burn" itself out, then only physical violence will stop it..

This describes the madness of the **wicked** in Psalms 1:1, "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the **ungodly**, (*râshâ'*) nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*" The *rasha* are those, believers or unbelievers, who have rejected the soul preserving concept of Bible Doctrine, which leaves their souls vulnerable to the influence of the sin nature in the flesh and the cosmic viewpoint of the demons in Satan's world with the result that their souls will be destroyed. But not satisfied with that the wicked seek now to destroy society around them beginning in the home, then spreading out and how they do that is by words, or folie a deux, **communicated insanity!**

But if there is **communicated insanity**, then there is **communicated sanity**, which is what Bible Doctrine does for us and that's what *sophroneo* is about - sanity of the soul, which comes about as the result of metabolized doctrine in the soul. Oftentimes we try to help these people because they are either family, friends, or co-workers, but the result is generally non-profitable for us because they don't want it. To get these people out of their insanity they must turn positive to Bible Doctrine and take it in on a consistent basis; they must turn to God and his Word.

The ancients regarded *sophrosune* as inner self government, which has a constant rein on all passions, lusts and irrational thinking. It has the idea of not being given over to irrational thinking, hysteria and emotionalism. It was a mind guided by logic, reason and thought where one is not swayed by the group mind-set; it's to be mentally stable, self-sufficient and in one's right mind. Which is what being **content** is all about in Philippians 4:11, "*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be **content** (*autarkēs*).*"

Nepho speaks of mental sobriety where the believer's mind is free from the influences of drugs and alcohol, which would be obvious, but also free from the lusts, passions and emotions of the flesh nature, especially the emotions. When one or more feelings of the emotional complex of the soul enter into our minds, then we are no longer able to think rationally, doctrinally, or cognitively.

If any one of the 7 feelings of the emotions make their way into our minds, whether fear, anger, guilt, grief, envy, human love concepts, or human happiness concepts, then we are no longer able to call to mind doctrinal concepts, or apply a doctrinal rationale to what we're going through. Whatever "thinking" we may come up with will be *dokeo* thinking, which is subjective thinking based upon one's feelings, or how one "feels", which is why America, its churches and people are spiraling downward into fragmentation, polarization and mental illness. Friendships are lost, marriages come apart, the children are swept into an insecure future all because of the emotions of people!

Fanaticism gripped pre WWII Japan causing a very strong warlike mentality to grip the nation, which resulted in the Pearl Harbor attack. It took a greater violence of war on the part of the US to stop it. The communists use folie in their revolutions by inflaming the emotions of people over some injustice so they can topple a government, purge the nation and gain their control. This is presently going on in America following the pattern of Bolshevik Russia.

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People get some kind of "feeling" in their minds, which becomes reality to them, and this feeling influences the way they think and how they relate to each other with disastrous results. "I feel you don't like me", or, "this is how I feel about it". That feeling gets into the realm of their thinking and off they go further away from reality into mental illness. **Emotional contagion** is the phenomenon of having one person's emotions and related behaviors directly trigger similar emotions and behaviors in other people. Some of the feelings or concepts associated with the fear complex are: fear, fright, worry, anxiety, consternation, dread, fright, terror, apprehension, uneasiness, nervousness, horror, terror, phobias of all kinds, insecurity, shyness, cowardice, fear of going ahead, being neutralized by fear, living in a state of fear, psychological addictions and physical addictions.

The word **contagion** denotes the communication of diseases directly or indirectly; and **emotional contagion** is the communication of emotions from one person to another. The closer in proximity to the other person, the frequency and the length of time one is exposed to their emotions determines the degree and efficiency of them communicating their emotions to you.

Positive and negative feelings can spread as fast as a text or phone call, as well as, being around them physically. It's an interactive dynamic where people synchronize their emotions with the emotions of people around them. It seems to be a bonding dynamic where the one imitates the emotions of the other person to show that there is a real connection to them. It can be done consciously or unconsciously. Obviously one can see the problems with that because if you're around negative people all the time,

then their negativity, or any emotion will “rub off on you”.

Catching a bad emotion is the same as catching a cold and we catch them from the people around us, that is, the people we allow into our lives! We can get them from the work place, from the home, from our friends or associates and from the communities we live in! The basic solution for this, although there has not been a study done yet on an antidote for being around people with negative emotions, and that is to remove yourself from them.

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Israel descended into madness as the result of their refusal to believe God. It all came about when they were posed to go by faith into the Land of Canaan, but they refused to do so, God said that they had tested him **ten times**. *"Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;"* But this time they weren't just grumbling and complaining i their lack of faith, but they refused to move forward by faith in his plan for their lives!

They were already descending into folie before this by their manifestation of complaining, but also their inability to think rationally! They were now thinking that God took them out into the wilderness to kill them! If he had wanted to do that, he could have let them die in Egypt! Or let the army overtake them! Why would he want to do that after he had set them free from slavery, basically destroyed the richest and most powerful nation on earth, wiped out its army in the Red Sea and loaded their carts up with gold, silver and precious stones? And that with all their children and possessions! They were displaying the irrational thinking because of their madness already.

Now when the spies came back they stated that the land was rich, productive, etc., but all they did was emphasize the forts and giants in the land, to which Caleb addressed them saying this was true, but they could take it! But the Israelites refused to believe the two and their report concerning the land and their lack of faith resulted in fear gripping the people. And this fear spread throughout the nation, one of the signs of madness or folie, and they dug in their heels and refused to go on in faith,

But this time it resulted in their collective punishment as a nation and God refused to take them into the land he had promised them. He would take all those under twenty years and younger into the land promised to them, but all those would die in the wilderness wandering around for forty years never enjoying the good life he was going to give to them!

And during those forty years their mental condition deteriorated even further into madness. So their poor children were raised by mentally ill parents. This was true for the nation as a whole, but there were those believers in Israel who were not affected by the group madness because they maintained the spiritual life walk given to them by the Lord. And so it will be today, as the nation devolves into madness, those believers who continue to live by faith will be able to avoid it!

So here are the factors involved in all this: 1) they disobeyed God, which resulted in their punishment, certainly the loss of all the blessings God had in store for them, 2) they didn't believe God, 3) they refused to move forward in faith, 4) they refused to be persuaded to believe God, 5) not having the soul's protection of a spiritual life dynamic, it was now vulnerable to the ravages of the emotional complex of the soul where now they were gripped by fear, 6) fear now decimated their souls where they devolved into madness, 7) now they were unable to think doctrinally, even rationally, 8) they lived out their lives under a curse.

The thing that stands out with this matter of faith is **action**! One is required to act on his faith, then we begin to see God come through for his with his deliverance. The emotion of fear, due to their unbelief, was now gripping the souls of the Israelites to the place where they refused to go forward in faith in the plan and will of God for their lives. This is the problem with *deilia* fear in that it holds us back. But God has not given us a spirit of fear. 2 Timothy 1:7, "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*"

Pastor Mike

Smite is the hiphil future of *nâkâh*. So what is it that causes believers to go into madness? The answer is that madness results as the result of being negative to doctrinal truth!

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