



April 6, 2014

Judges 16

“Doing What’s Right in God’s Eyes”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Pastor Gary commented on the fact that he wished he were able to say that the book of Judges ended on a positive and uplifting note, but the sad truth is that it doesn’t, and the reason is found in [Judges 21:25](#), the last verse of the book, which tells us that *“[in] those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”*

In the closing chapters of Judges, particularly [Judges 19–21](#), we read about some of the most disgusting and deplorable acts recorded in the Bible. These chapters reveal the details about the lives of people who displayed some of the most base and vile human behavior imaginable, which is what happens when people rule themselves by their own personal standards of right and wrong, and good and bad.

It’s important to notice that the Bible doesn’t indicate that everyone did what was wrong in his or her own eyes. These people were doing what they were doing, and they were doing it thinking that they were doing right, and not thinking that what they were doing was wrong. In other words, they had not abandoned the concept of right and wrong, good and bad; they had rejected God’s definitions of right and wrong, good and bad, and replaced them with their own definitions.

In this study, we’ll take a look at religion and morality; two specific ways the Israelites were *“doing that which was right in [their] own eyes.”*¹

Religion

1. The Israelites decided they would worship God on their own terms; when they wanted, where they wanted, and the way they wanted.

¹ [Joshua 17:6; 21:25 KJV](#)

2. They didn't believe there were sacred priests, a sacred place or a sacred practice, because it was their standard to recognize anyone as a priest, and anywhere was as good as any other place to worship, and finally, it was an anything goes policy!
3. **Judges 17** tells the story of three generations of an Israelite family: Micah, his mother, and one of his sons.
 - a. Many Bible scholars believe Micah was about 50 years old, his mother was in her 70s, and the son he selected was in his 20s.
4. **Judges 17:1** tells us that Micah confessed to his mother for stealing 1,100 shekels of silver.
5. Remarkably, we read in **Judges 17:2**, that his mother responded to his confession by saying, *"The Lord bless you, my son!"*
6. We're left to wonder what in the world was going on in this family when we read her response concerning the theft of what today would amount to about \$9,000.00!
7. In **Judges 17:3**, we read that Micah's mother made a decision to *"solemnly consecrate [her] silver to the Lord for [her] son to make a carved image and a cast idol."*
8. She dedicated her silver to the Lord for the purpose of making a carved image and a cast idol so she could worship them instead of the Lord.
9. These details show us how twisted their form of religion was, because, again, it was the case that people worshiped when they wanted, where they wanted, and how they wanted.
10. Micah already had a shrine, so they hired a silversmith who made the image and the idol to put in his personal "holy hut," along with a priest's vest (ephod) and other idols.
11. Micah didn't have a priest, but it didn't matter to him that his family was not from the tribe of the Levites, because he thought to himself, "I'll just install one of my sons as priest!"
12. They went along in this way until the day a young Levite wandered into town looking for a place to stay.

13. Micah worked out a deal with the Levite, who agreed to move in with Micah's family and become Micah's personal priest.
14. In **Judges 18** we read that the tribe of Dan passed through Micah's area on their way to settle the northern part of Israel.
 - a. When the Danites found out about Micah's idols and his priest, they decided to appropriate them for themselves.
 - b. **Judges 18:27** - *"Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a peaceful and unsuspecting people. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city."*
 - c. **Judges 18:30-31** - *"There the Danites set up for themselves the idols, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. They continued to use the idols Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh."*
 - d. The House of God (Tabernacle) was in Shiloh, so that's where the sacrifices were supposed to be offered, by real priests.
15. Since this was a time of doing whatever, they invoked God's name, but they worshiped him on their own terms, with their own priests and their own idols, which completely corrupted the true worship of God.

Morality

16. The Israelites not only did their own "religion thing," they also defined what was right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust.
17. There have always been and there will always be those who defiantly state that they don't need God to tell them what to do and what not to do, and the Israelites were no exception.
18. **Judges 19-21** tells the story of the depths of depravity that had taken hold of the nation of Israel, a people who had rejected God's definition of right and wrong, and replaced it with their own.
19. **Judges 19:1-4** - *"In those days Israel had no king. Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her father's house in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months, her husband went to her to persuade her to return. He had with him his servant and two donkeys. She took him into her father's house, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. His father-in-law, the girl's father, prevailed upon him to*

stay; so he remained with him three days eating and drinking, and sleeping there.”

20. Considering the fact that a Levite had a concubine was simply blatant hypocrisy, which demonstrates that all moral constraint had been thrown out the window!
 - a. In that day a concubine was basically a “second-class wife.”
 - b. The “husband’s” responsibility was to provide her with food, clothing, and shelter.
 - c. The concubine’s responsibility was to provide her “husband” with sex.
 - d. If the man’s wife were barren, any children born of the concubine would become his heirs.
 - e. If the man’s wife had children by him, the concubine’s children would forfeit any claim to an inheritance.
 - f. It’s worth repeating that just because we read Bible accounts of multiple wives and concubines, that doesn’t mean God approved, because God revealed his plan in [Genesis 2:24](#), which says: *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”*
 - g. God’s plan has always been and will always be one man for one woman for a lifetime!

21. The concubine’s “husband” stayed well into the fifth day before they were able to start their journey home, but they didn’t get far before nightfall.
 - a. They stopped in Gibeah for the night, and they waited in the town square hoping that someone would approach them with an offer of hospitality.
 - b. An old man came along and encouraged them to stay the night with him.

22. [Judges 19:20-22](#) - *“ ‘You are welcome at my house,’ the old man said. ‘Let me supply whatever you need. Only don’t spend the night in the square.’ So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink. While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, ‘Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.’ ”*

23. [Judges 19:23-30](#) tells the rest of the story, and the disgusting and outrageous details include:
 - i. Flagrant homosexuality.
 - ii. A father who was willing to turn over his own daughter and another man’s “wife” to a crazed mob of men, instead of protecting and defending them to the point of being willing to die for them.
 - iii. The horrific abuse of a woman by the men of the town.

- iv. The death of this woman from the injuries and abuse she sustained.
 - v. A husband who muttered, "Get up, let's go!" as he stepped over her lifeless body that was clinging to the threshold.
 - vi. A man who cut up his "wife's" body into 12 pieces for the purpose of sending some kind of "calling card" to the 12 Tribes of Israel so they would go to war against the people of Gibeah (tribe of Benjamin).
- b. [Genesis 19](#) tells the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is eerily similar to the story in [Judges 19](#).
 - c. This story is sick, repulsive, immoral, and horrifying, but it's what happens when people do *"what is right in their own eyes."*
24. It's God's intention that these chapters would shock us, which is why these closing chapters of the book of Judges are so significant for us today, because we are moving – at the speed of light – to a time in our own nation that resembles the nation of Israel during the time of the Judges.
- a. It is appalling what we are capable of doing as human beings when we reject God's definition of right and wrong and replace it with our own.
 - b. No society is safe when it operates independent of God's definition of right and wrong, good and bad.
 - c. Just like in the time of the Judges, people today are doing what they are doing, and in the process rejecting God's definition of things and thinking that what they are doing is right!
25. When God's Word and his standards are rejected, we will end up with a society that just starts doing what it wants to, and the ultimate destination that road leads to a self-governing world that the Bible predicts will happen under the leadership of the Antichrist.
- a. There will be a time when people will completely reject God.
 - b. There will be a time when people will worship a world leader as God or be killed for refusing to do so.
 - c. There will be a time when there will be world chaos, world wars, and the murdering of Jews that will make the Holocaust pale in comparison.
26. It's hard to believe, but we are hearing more and more people speak in glowing and positive terms about how enlightened and progressive our society has become!
- a. The definition of progressive in our culture is to be more enlightened and forward thinking.
 - b. It means to embrace a new morality in which morality evolves with the passage of time, when the restraint of God and his definitions of right and wrong are tossed aside so there'll be complete adoption of personal standards.

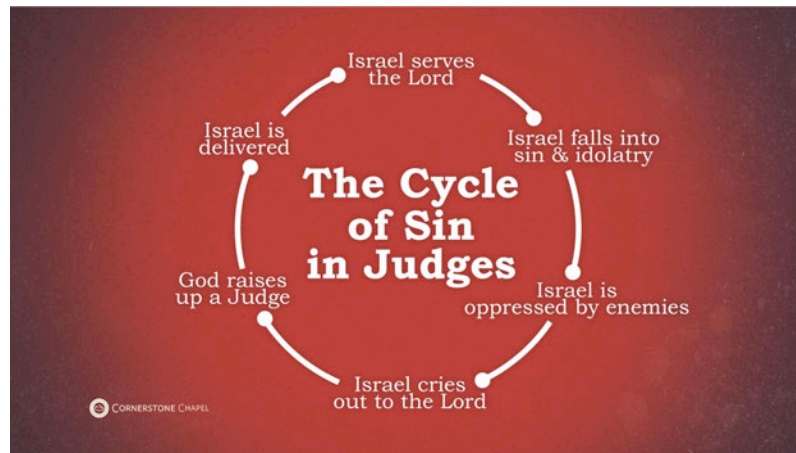
27. The strange truth is that people who embrace the so-called new morality and progressive ideology label people who don't agree with them as intolerant bigots who are out of step with mainstream society.
28. In the first 200 years of American history, people pretty much agreed about what was right and what was wrong, because our Constitution and our laws were shaped by the biblical world-view of our Founding Fathers.
- Twenty-nine of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence had a seminary or Bible school degree, and that's why this founding document referred to "the Laws of Nature and Nature's God."
 - By referring to the "the Laws of Nature and Nature's God" the signers of that document declared that the source of natural law came from God.
 - They did not establish a Theocracy, but what they did do was establish a nation whose foundation rests upon the universal, fundamental, and eternal laws of God.
 - We are, in fact, "endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights"!
29. In the last few decades there has been a seismic shift away from what used to be generally accepted values of right and wrong, and those values and mores have been challenged in classrooms, courtrooms, and even in churches!
- One local example of this troubling trend is the recent "Love Rally" held in March 2014 at the Loudoun County Court House in Leesburg.²
 - Truth that used to be held as sacred, objective, and non-negotiable is now seen as secular, subjective, and very negotiable.
30. Pastor Gary stated that those who believe God's definition of right and wrong, good and bad, has not changed with changing times, and that God is the ultimate, objective, highest standard of truth by which all things should be measured, and by which our lives should be lived, are the new minority.
31. Pastor Gary's challenge to Christians is that we must be intentional and unashamed of living out our faith and holding our ground in defense of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
32. **Romans 1:16** - *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..."*

Discussion Questions

- Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.

² <http://bit.ly/1n4XuTv>

2. Read [Judges 17](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences regarding having a form of religion.
4. What are some of the ways people worship God on their own terms?
5. What does it say about someone who says, "I'm a Christian," but his or her "religion and morality" don't seem to match up with the biblical definition of what a real Christian "looks like"?
6. How do you respond to family and friends who say, "I worship God when I'm camping and out enjoying nature, so I don't need to go to church"?
7. Provide an overview of the account of the Levite and his concubine. (See #19 - #23 above)
8. What are some of the ways you've personally experienced the decline of morality in our society?
9. What are some of the characteristics of the lifestyles of people who embrace a "progressive viewpoint" or the "new morality"?
10. Spend time talking about a recent Barna Group survey (April 2014) that reveals a serious drop in the percentage of people in our country who don't believe the Bible is God's Word, etc.
 - a. Use this link to access the online article: <http://bit.ly/1qsoTyL>
11. How do you live intentionally and unashamedly for the Lord?
12. Read and discuss [Romans 1:16](#).
13. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's remarks concerning those who believe God is the ultimate, objective, highest standard of truth by which all things should be measured, and by which our lives should be lived, as being in the new minority.
14. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: purpose in their heart to follow the will and ways of the Lord so they'll know how to live a holy life before the Lord; be willing to stand up for truth in a time when the truth of God's Word is no longer considered of importance by a growing percentage of the population in our country.



* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).