

Period of Judges

At the end of the book of *Joshua*, the Israelites reaffirmed their covenant before the Lord, to worship Him only and to obey His statutes. They made a solemn oath to Joshua just before he died. By the end of the book of *Judges*, the wheels had come off of the wagon, and we hardly recognize the Israel of old.

People worshiped Gideon's ephod, Gideon himself fell into polygamy, and Abimelech (Gideon's son) killed his 70 brothers to rule over Shechem. Then, there were stories like the Levite and his abused and butchered concubine, the sexually perverted men of Gibeah, and the Danites' gross idolatry. What happened? The author explained the period with the last verse in the book, "In those days Israel had no king, so the people did whatever was right in their own eyes" (21:25).

The point here was that without a king, who imposed a common morality, the people chose their own morality, which led to social confusion and chaos, a period where everyone was "free" to pursue his own sinful pleasures, which in turn created an environment in which no one's life, liberty, or property was safe.

When we read things like this, we are tempted to dismiss them as days long ago.

That could never happen today, right?

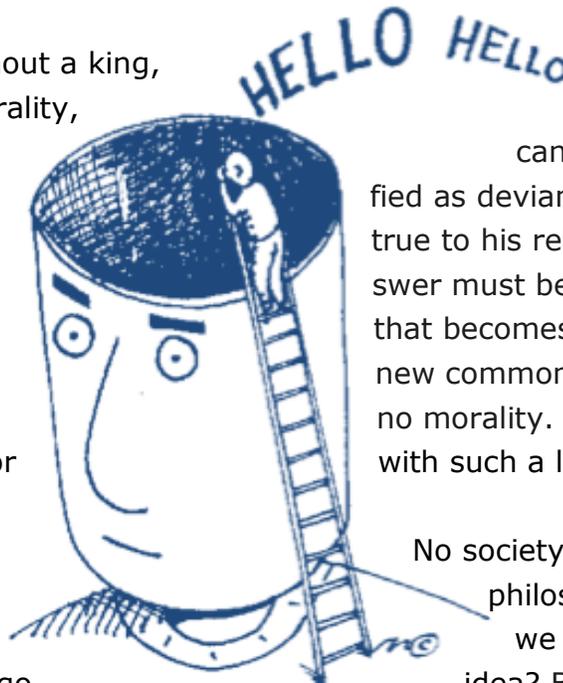
Think again. In our postmodern world, we are a people "without a king," doing whatever is right in our own eyes.

Moral Relativism

In our secular humanist society, we have no "king." We have "killed" Him, that is God, or at least we've rejected Him, which simply means that we as a people no longer hold to His statutes, His commandments, or His Word. In our tolerant world, anything goes; and, if God's people object (which would be part of "anything goes," right?), then we are labeled "intolerant." Go figure.

We no longer have a common standard of morality; rather we hold to the idea that morality is relative to each individual. Each person is free to choose what is right and what is wrong, what is good behavior and what is deviant behavior. But, in a world where anything goes, can any behavior be classified as deviant behavior? If one is true to his relativism, then the answer must be no; anything goes, and that becomes the new absolute. The new common morality is that there is no morality. Can a society endure with such a ludicrous standard?

No society can survive with such a philosophy, so then why are we clinging to this insane idea? Because we do not like



the alternative, that there is a common morality. A common morality gives evidence that there is a standard of morality; and, to admit that there is a standard of morality is to admit that someone is behind that standard, someone to which we are all accountable. Because we do not like the alternative, we will perpetuate the insane notion of no absolute morality.

Common Morality Is Common Sense

Imagine a basketball game in which every participant played by his own rules. Who would decide how many points to award for making a shot. What would be considered a foul, a travel, or goal tending? Imagine the chaos that would ensue. Sooner or later, every participant would get offended or frustrated and quit.

We would never play a basketball game that way, but for some reason we are willing to live our lives that way. We all “play by our own rules” and expect for everyone to get along and play nicely together?

Life is just like a game of basketball. When there are objective rules, then everyone is on the same page; every player knows the rules, and every player is expected to follow the rules. It is, therefore, common sense to have rules, and so it is in society; it is common sense to have a common morality, a standard by which every individual lives and one to which every person is held accountable. This kind of sense promotes peace and true liberty.

The next logical question, then, is this — which standard of common morality is the best one to use? How about the one that we are born with? Every person is born with a conscience, with an innate sense of right and wrong, of fair and unfair. We know when we have been wronged, as well as when we have wronged others. We don’t have to be told that lying, cheating, stealing, and killing are wrong. We know it instinctively.

Why not use the standard of morality that our country was built upon — the Judeo-Christian standard found in the Scriptures and promoted in the life and teaching of Christ and His apostles? This standard has served us well for over 400 years. Why would we abandon it now, when we have seen the relative peace, liberty, and prosperity that it has produced? Because to continue holding to this standard means to acknowledge and fear the God behind it, a proposition that our secular society cannot stomach.

No, we would rather play the game with no rules, no matter how absurd, chaotic, frustrating, or offensive things get. We would rather have no king and do whatever seems right in our own eyes. To ignore the reasonableness of common morality is to ignore the truth of it and, rather, to exchange that truth for the lie of moral relativism. The problem is, “there is a way that seems right to a man, but it’s way only leads to death” (*Proverbs 14:12*).