

**Text: Judges 17:1-6 (Pew Bible pg.251)**

**Title: “Your Truth ... My Truth”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Open your Bibles to Judges 17. The period of the Judges has to be one of the most mysterious times in all of biblical history. After the great leaders Moses and Joshua pass off the scene, there was a period of time before the period of the kings when Israel was led by a succession of leaders known as judges. They were not really judges in the sense that we know them today. They were more like military leaders. Israel struggled during this time to remain faithful to the Lord, as is seen in this story in Judges 17. Read vv.1-5.

Let me just give you a bit of background here. There's a man named Micah who stole some silver that belonged to his mother, but then returned it because she uttered a curse against the person who had stolen it. She uses a pagan curse and then a spiritual blessing in the name of the Lord. And she consecrated her money to the Lord, then she wanted her money used to make a carved image and a cast idol which was forbidden by God. So the mother has a silversmith melt the silver down and make it into an idol. Then he proceeds to build a shrine in his home and appoints his son as its priest.

What you see is DIY religion at work ... do it yourself religion. God had clearly established His Law for Israel which instructed His people how they were to conduct their worship. This Law was the truth and if people order their lives according to the truth, then they would be blessed. But that's not the way it was in those days.

For you see it says...

**Judges 17:6 - In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.**

**Judges 17:6 (ESV) - In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

How many of you know that we live in a day when people are simply doing what is right in their own eyes.

This series I'm preaching is entitled “Hazmat ... The Most Dangerous Ideas in Your Culture.” These are ideas, thoughts, philosophies that evolve into full-blown worldviews. Some of them are very subtle, and we don't even realize that we have been exposed to them. We are exposed to them in classrooms, or on television programs, or internet blogs, or political debates, and in even in some churches. And my design in this series of messages is to help us be alert to the hazardous material ... ideas, philosophies, worldviews and arguments ... and to do what Paul talks about in...

**2 Corinthians 10:5 - We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

And one of these arguments that sets itself up against the knowledge of God ... one of the most hazardous ideas in our culture today ... is the idea that we are free to determine for ourselves what is

true. So we could come to the place where we simply say, “Well, that may be true for you, but it isn’t true for me.” Every moral dilemma we face in our lives and in our land boils down to this: Is there such a thing as truth ... absolute truth ... that applies to everyone, or do we just decide what is true for us and go with that.

**ILLUSTRATION** – Think of truth as a great bookshelf with thousands of books in it. And everything that can be known about anything is included in one of those books. Everything in those books is absolutely true whether it is in the field of science or mathematics or philosophy or morality. Those books contain the instructions for doing something right, whether it is how to manage your finances, or how to treat your children, or how to behave sexually, or any other question you can imagine. And let’s just call that bookshelf “absolute truth” or “objective truth.” It is objective because it is outside of us. We don’t have this truth in us automatically. So if we want to know what is true we have to seek it outside of ourselves. It is not based on anything I think or believe it is true whether I believe it or obey it or not.

One of the great hazardous, lethal, toxic ideas out there in our culture today is the belief that that bookshelf (absolute, objective truth) just doesn’t exist. Or if it does, it’s impossible to know what it is. So that means that we get to make up our own rules. This is called “moral relativism.” That means that the morality or immorality of something is all relative to your situation. For example, someone may say, “Well it’s fine for you to remain sexually pure before marriage, but I just don’t believe that way. If you want to believe that’s true, fine; but I just don’t think it’s true.”

And this is what the Bible talks about in the book of Romans:

**Romans 1:18 - The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,**

**Romans 1:25 - They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.**

So you have a collision of two worldviews. The first worldview is a man-centered worldview where humans determine what is true for themselves. The second worldview is a God-centered worldview where He determines what is true ... that God has established an unchanging standard of what is right and what is wrong.

But we have a problem. Our sinful condition has blinded us to the truth. We can’t see it, so we make up our own truth.

**ILLUSTRATION** – There’s an old parable about six blind men who happen upon an elephant. They’ve never encountered an elephant before so they don’t know what it is. Trying to figure out what an elephant is, each blind man touched a different part of the elephant. The first blind man rubs his hand across the flat, sturdy side of the elephant and concludes that the elephant is a wall. The second blind man grabs the pointed end of the elephant’s tusk and decides that an elephant is a spear. The third man grabs the elephant’s long trunk and concludes that an elephant is a snake. The fourth blind man wraps his arms around the elephant’s leg and reasons that the elephant is a tree. Fifth

blind man touches the elephant's thin, flapping ear and thinks that the elephant is a fan. The last blind man takes hold of the elephant's skinny tail and determines that an elephant is a rope.

The problem for these men is that they are blind. They think from their limited exposure to the elephant that they know what it is. But they don't. And they come away drawing all the wrong conclusions.

And that's what sin has done to us. It has blinded us. And we are reduced to doing what they did in the days of the Judges ... each one doing what is right in his own eyes.

So the big question is this: Do we live in a universe that has been created by the One True God, is ordered by the One True God, and is accountable to the One True God, or do we live in a universe that is random, with no authority to answer to, no right or wrong, only that which is determined as each one does what is right in his or her own eyes. You can boil all worldviews down to those two competing world views. Which one will you choose to hang your life on?

Well God has not left us on our own in this terrible dilemma. There is a way for us to know what is true, and to link our lives to what is true. This morning we're going to build a chain of truth. It all starts with...

## **1. THE EXISTENCE OF THE ONE, TRUE GOD**

This worldview begins with the conviction that there is one eternal God who created all things. And that this God is true in His person.

**Jeremiah 10:10a - But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King.**

We are sometimes deceitful, inconsistent and untruthful, but this is impossible for God. Everything about Him is perfect and true.

God is true in His thoughts and judgments about things.

**Revelation 16:7 - "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."**

Everything God thinks is true. Now you and I think things that are not true. So when we say, "I think..." it doesn't mean that it is true; it is our opinion of what is true. It doesn't matter what you or I think. The truth is only found in what God thinks.

So if God is true in his person and character, and He is true in His thoughts and judgments, then He is most certainly true in what He says. Jesus praised His Father...

**John 17:17 - Your word is truth.**

And so God is true in all His ways.

**Revelation 15:3b - “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages.**

When we get away from the one, true God it always leads to the establishment of other gods or idols in our lives. This is what happened in Judges 17. How crazy this is! Imagine an Israelite saying....

**Judges 17:3 - “I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD ... for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol.**

So that’s the first link in the chain of truth ... the existence of the One True God. Now the question is how can we know anything about this One True God. Well, that’s the next link in the chain of truth.

## **2. THE WRITTEN REVELATION OF TRUTH IN SCRIPTURE**

Now, again, we are like the blind men who encountered the elephant. In our own reasoning we think we can figure it out, but we can’t. So how can we know anything about this One True God? The answer is that the One True God is a self-revealing God. The reason we can know Him and know the truth is because the God of truth has revealed Himself to all of us.

And He has done that in a written way through Scripture. God has given us a miraculous book called the Bible that is perfectly true.

**Psalm 33:4 - For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.**

**Psalm 119:142 - Your righteousness is everlasting and your law is true.**

And this written revelation of truth in the Bible is God’s moral law ... the enduring standard of what is right and what is wrong. That Law is a perfect reflection of God’s holiness and character. A perfect God would never give us an imperfect Bible. So if we want to know what God is like, we can read and study His Word which perfectly reveals God’s character and moral law.

This moral law is a universal standard for all humans in every age and in every nation or culture. Murder is wrong in the US and it’s wrong in China. Stealing is wrong in Russia and in Venezuela. It doesn’t matter what the laws of that land are. God’s moral law supersedes them all.

This moral law is unchanging. Jesus said...

**Matthew 5:18 - I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.**

That means that if adultery was wrong 2000 years ago, it is wrong today.

All that happens here in Judges 17 is in clear violation of the written revelation that God gave through Moses in the Ten Commandments and the Law.

The first and second commands of the Ten Commandments say:

**Exodus 20:3 - “You shall have no other gods before me.**

**Exodus 20:4 - “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.**

And instead of living by this truth, the man and his mother in Judges 17 simply did what was right in their own eyes.

So the first link in the chain of truth is the existence of the One True God. The second link is the written revelation of truth in Scripture. But God didn't stop there. He is a self-revealing God, and He completed that revelation of Himself by becoming a man so that we could know perfectly what He is like and what is His will. So the third link in the chain of truth is...

### **3. THE PERSONAL REVELATION OF TRUTH IN CHRIST**

So God is true in His Person. His Word is the written revelation of truth. But God had yet another complete expression of His truth ... His Son Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us...

**John 1:9 - The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.**

**John 1:14 - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**1 John 5:20 - We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.**

The Law revealed that in our sin we are all naturally set against the truth. So the Law showed our sin, and then God sent His Son to save us from our sins. Jesus came as the pure embodiment of truth in every way because He was the perfect God/Man.

**John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

Nearly 300 times in the Gospels Jesus utters the words, “I tell you the truth.” So whatever and whenever Jesus speaks, it is truth. Jesus' judgment on a matter is always true. When Jesus says something is right, it is right. When Jesus says something is wrong, it is wrong.

And the message of the coming of Christ and the reason for the coming of God is found the Gospel.

**Ephesians 1:13a - And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.**

The only way our lives can ever line up with truth and to deal with our sin, guilt and judgment is to put our trust in the One who is the way, the truth and the life. The only way for our sin to be forgiven is for a sinless One, Jesus Christ, to die as the atoning sacrifice for our sin. He took our place, so that when we put our trust in Him we are saved.

Now that leads me to the last link in the chain of truth. There's the existence of the One True God, the written revelation of truth in Scripture by which we know the personal revelation of truth in Christ. But that is all true, whether you believe it and obey it or not. So the final link has to be...

#### **4. THE LIFE OF OBEDIENCE TO THE TRUTH**

It is possible to know in your head that God is true, that His Word is truth, and that His Son Jesus Christ is the only true way for life. But if you don't adjust your life to that truth, and link your life to that truth, you are doomed for eternal destruction.

**ILLUSTRATION** – It's one thing to know the Law of Gravity is true. It's another thing to honor it. Someone standing on the top of a ten story building may know that the Law of Gravity is true. But the minute they step off of that building they are disobeying the truth, and it will be to their grave peril. The truth is still the truth; but for us to benefit from the truth we have to obey it.

**John 3:21 - But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”**

**John 8:32 - Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

And you see, God wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). And then once we are saved He wants us to link our lives with truth and live by it.

**3 John 4 - I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.**

#### **CONCLUSION**

So the big question is this: Do we live in a universe that has been created by the One True God, is ordered by the One True God, and is accountable to the One True God, or we live in a universe that is random, with no authority to answer to, no right or wrong, only that which is determined as each one does what is right in his or her own eyes. You can boil all worldviews down to those two competing world views. Which one will you choose to hang your life on?