

September 9, 2018
IT'S A MAD, MAD WORLD - Part 5
"Toxicity"

Normal is essentially whatever we get used to.

We need a standard to discern whether our normal is good or bad.

In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses lays out God's rules and standards - what God says should be the norm for how His creations are to live and treat one another, and that norm was determined by God and His holy, just and loving character.

Judges 2:10 (ESV): "...And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel."

When Joshua and his generation passed on, the generation who came after them became enamored with the ways of the world around them, and they began to forget the old ways and live a new normal.

Judges 2:11-14 (ESV): "¹¹And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. ¹²And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger.... ¹⁴So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies."

This didn't happen overnight - it was a gradual turning over years, but it was very real, and people became used to new norms.

These sins were only harming God's beloved people, and He hated it and warned them there would be consequences.

Judges 2:15 (ESV): "...they were in terrible distress."

Judges 2:18-19 (ESV): "¹⁸Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. ¹⁹But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways."

Judges shows this downward spiral as a recurring pattern – people “did what was evil in the sight of the Lord,” the LORD allows them to suffer consequences; they cry out to the LORD for help; He raises up a judge to free them; but “whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers.”

Judges 17:6 (ESV): “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (also Judges 21:15)

The norms were whatever people wanted them to be – in effect each person was their own king, doing whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

The problem with sin is it’s enticing, it’s addictive, and it’s never enough!

We live in a mad, mad world – a mad, as in angry world, & a mad, as in crazy world.

Judges says that “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” because “In those days there was no king in Israel.”

The implication is that we need a strong leader, a king, who will lead us in God’s ways and keep us pointed in the right direction, no matter where the culture around is calling us.

Ruth 4:17 (ESV): “And the women of the neighborhood gave him [Ruth’s child] a name, saying, ‘A son has been born to Naomi.’ They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.”

David, Israel’s second king, would ultimately be a model for the Jews’ understanding of the Messiah, which means God’s anointed or king.

John 19:19 (ESV): “Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.’”

Revelation 17:14 (ESV): ““They will make war on the Lamb [Jesus Christ], and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.””

As “Lord of lords and King of kings,” everyone will be subject to Jesus.

Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV): “⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Jesus as King is the living example of God's norm, who shows us how to live day-in and day-out, and who, through the power of His Spirit, enables us to avoid sliding down that slippery slope that the Israelites experienced in Judges.

An ambassador represents another country in a foreign land, and while the ambassador interacts with the local culture, he's always committed to his home country.

2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (ESV): “¹⁹...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us....”

Scripture drives us to one inescapable conclusion - Jesus Christ is King and Lord, and if we choose to follow him, to be his disciples, we are saved for the Kingdom of God, to live *for* Christ and *by* his norms.

Is Christ *my* Savior *and* King?

Get the *Life Journal* Bible Reading Plan at gateway-community.org/Find-it

Follow Randy on Twitter @HagemanRandy

Wifi available for those with limited data plans | Password: gateway17