

Relativism Rules! (Or Does It?)

Judges 21:25, Deut 12:8

(Zeke Flores, some material from Terry Slack, Ethan Longhenry)

Intro: *Relativism is major philosophical force & alive and well in America*

- A. Is seen in every corner of our culture & is creeping across religious landscape, even our churches.
- B. Defined: “The doctrine that no ideas or beliefs are universally true or absolute but that all are, instead, “relative” — that is, their validity depends on the circumstances in which they are applied.” (American Heritage Dictionary)
- C. Three forms:
 1. “Man doesn’t have the capacity to make proper judgments”
 2. “The meaning of words is relative and cannot be absolute”
 3. “What is right / true for you may not be right / true for me”
 4. Contained in the notion: “*Everything is right sometime, nothing is right every time!*”
 5. However, ALL are self-contradictory and are the judgment of man!
 6. At one time, Bible was viewed by most as source of truth, has been replaced by feelings, majority rule, etc
- D. “***Truth is abhorred by the masses!***” (Baltasar Gracian, 17th cent Jesuit priest)
 1. Think not? State publicly that only Xians go to heaven, homosexuality is perversion, abortion is murder, wife to be submissive, husband is leader, marriage is for a lifetime.
 - a. You’ll hear shouts of “intolerant, arrogant, bigot, homophobe, chauvinist, etc”
 2. To our “politically correct” culture the greatest sin is to proclaim **anyone** wrong about **anything**.
- E. However, the results of relativism is not liberty, as some think, but opens the door to a host of problems that will enslave us all.

I. Relativism Results In:

A. The Encouragement of Immorality

1. Since there is no standard of right & wrong, except as I/society determine, why not permit all types of sexual activity?
 - a. Homosexuality, pedophilia, bestiality
2. If society determines right/wrong, consider that pedophilia is “wrong” but homosexuality is OK though considered “wrong” until about 30 years ago.
3. Perhaps there is a higher, more reliable standard
 - a. **1 Cor 6:9-10, 1 Tim 1:9-10, Rom 1:26-27**

B. The Hindrance of Evangelism

1. In the past, though people differed about what the Bible *meant*, they at least believed it to be God’s word and thus the standard by which everything measured. Today, people no longer believe that.
2. See how difficult evangelism becomes in environment where there is no absolute truth; where every opinion/view is seen as legitimate.
 - a. **John 14:6, Acts 4:12**
3. If on board an airplane and only one emergency exit is functional, it does no good to point people to another way, and you’re not perceived as “intolerant” if you point to the only door that works!

C. Increased Risk of Persecution

1. When culture rejects absolute truth, the only vice that cannot be tolerated is the sin of intolerance!
 - a. To the relativist, to assert that Jesus is THE only way, is to say that Buddha, Mohammed inferior.
 - b. To relativist, to say that homosexuality is perversion, is to encourage their mistreatment.
2. May come a time when such “absolute” speech will be illegal, thus punishable.
 - a. In 2006, a Colorado valedictorian was required to apologize for including religious material in her 30 second speech.

- b. In 2002, Canadian Hugh Owens placed newspaper ad denouncing homosexuality with Bible passages; fined \$4500 for engaging in “offensive behavior.” Commission determined he could speak out against homosexuality as long as he did not use Scripture.
 - c. In 2004 Ake Green, Swedish Pentecostal pastor, was imprisoned for denouncing homosexuality in a sermon.
3. How much longer until it comes to us?
- a. **2 Tim 3:12, John 16:33**

II. Some Truths about Truth:

A. Absolute Truth Is Revealed

1. Since relativist believes “truth” is constructed by societies/individuals, there is no “one size fits all.”
 - a. Hmm... What about governments that believe it’s OK to starve / torture its citizens? Who can say *absolutely* that cruelty to humans is wrong?
2. Is there “all truth” on any subject? If so, who gives it?
 - a. **John 16:13, 1 Cor 2:11-13, 1 Thess 2:13**

B. Absolute Truth Is Universal

1. If something *absolutely* true, then by its very nature it is applicable to all regardless of age, sex, culture, etc.
 - a. Example: $2+2=4$, 24 hrs/day
 - b. Eg; Law of gravity (jump out of plane)
 - c. For generations, men believed world was flat; didn’t just become round because Galileo said so; **truth was** it had *always* been so. (**Matt 24:35**)
2. The general view today is that Bible only applies to those who believe it but it claims otherwise:
 - a. **Psalm 119:160, John 8:31-32, 2 Tim 2:15**
3. Also sets forth what *attitudes* toward truth ought to be
 - a. **Prov 23:23, 2 Thess 2:10, Rom 2:8**

C. Absolute Truth Is Exclusive

1. “*Well, maybe we’re both right*” may be sometimes true; but in realm of absolute truth, it follows that some things are absolutely false.
 - a. $2+2=5$, 8 days/week
 - b. If there is only ONE right answer, then all others are WRONG!
2. Bible: Salvation rec’d as gift from God.
 - a. Islam: Salvation earned **ONLY** through Islam and through good deeds
 - b. Both could be wrong, but NOT both right.
3. Bible: Salvation comes thru Jesus **ONLY**
 - a. Judaism: Rejects Jesus as Messiah
 - b. Both could be wrong, but NOT both right.
4. **Prov 14:12**

Conc: *There IS such a thing as absolute truth - John 8:31-32*

- A. It’s not determined by you, me, society, or our government.
- B. It’s been delivered long ago and never changes; hence, you and I both are amenable to it.
- C. The truth is: Jesus loves you, gave His life for you, but **COMMANDS** you to respond in repentance & baptism.
 1. NO amount of majority rule or relativism will save from the consequences of rejecting Jesus.
- D. **INV**