

MAGNOLIA MINDS: A moral authority beyond ourselves

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The book of Judges is a Hollywood film makers' paradise. Filled with intrigue, violence, and a myriad of fleshly indulgences, the theme of the book is contained in Judges 17:6 and repeated three additional times! (18:1, 19:1 and 21:25) There is no king in Israel...and Israel did exactly what they wanted for more than two centuries.

Bible interpreters will easily note the parallels between Israel during the period of the Judges and contemporary western ideas and culture. Israel had no earthly king, but they certainly were not lacking a heavenly sovereign! Nonetheless, after the death of Joshua and those who assisted him, Israel began a long slide into the cesspool of pagan idolatry and practice. Only God could extricate them from their sin, and He used the judges to drive out oppressors and return Israel to Him, albeit temporarily.

The judges have familiar names like Gideon and Samson and unfamiliar names like Othniel and Ehud. But though each was flawed in his own way, each served as types or "pointers" to a complete deliverer in the future—the Messiah. God was

protecting His seed and His name and the people He intended to carry the responsibility for both. Judges is their story and God's victory.

It seems we need a moral authority beyond ourselves. The "expressive self", so called by Carl Trueman in his book, *Strange New World*, has been given the keys to the cultural car. And we are badly in need of some driver's education in the form of biblical authority and a return to old paths.

History has proven that we don't prosper when we leave our God. But history has also exposed the fallacy of merely wringing our hands or screaming at the culture. Instead, in the fullness of time God sent His Son to reign over the kingdom of man in the hearts of those who have eyes to see. We are to preach this Savior until we die and invite others to turn aside and meet Him as their true sovereign.

It's dark outside, but the Light of the world has come. These are exciting days for the gospel and those who love the soon return of the King. It's never been more clear that the church is the plan and the gospel is the message. Preach the good news, friends.

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