**Right, Wrong, and Conflict Resolution**

“Right” and “Wrong.” “Light” and “Dark.” “Good” and “Evil.” “Righteousness” and “Sin.” Man, alone, struggles even with the concepts, let alone the definitions. We see- perhaps because we want to, “grey” areas between right and wrong, “shadows” between light and dark, amorality between good and evil, and righteous acts with impure motives or sinful acts with pure motives.

Without God, and with Him absolute truth, *any* society will struggle with “right” and “wrong”- not so much the concept as the definition. *Our* society is a prime example. Having either partially or wholly and theoretically or practically denied God as our Creator, rejected Him as our Guide, and scoffed at Him as our Judge, we now struggle mightily to determine “right” and “wrong” for ourselves. To say there is no real consensus on the matter would be a vast understatement.

Why even bother? If we are not made in His image and guided by His revealed will, and won’t be eternally judged, why not just let “each do what is right in his own eyes” (cf. Judges 21:25)? Because civilized society can’t exist or operate with anarchy as its basis. We need “right” and “wrong” both to be in any sense “civilized” and to live together in any kind of “society.” So how do we get there, “there” being “right” and “wrong” that not only allows, but is the foundation of, civilized society?

**I. The World’s Methods of Determining “Right” and “Wrong”**- (In the relegated absence of God, it has utilized several approaches in the effort).

1. **The *Most Powerful* Determine It.** *Might* makes “right”- the Iron Rule.
2. **The *Educated/Enlightened Elite* Determine It.** But *who* are they; *how* is such determined; and by *whom*.
3. **The *Majority* Determines It.** Kind of where we are now- unfortunately. History proves such to be a most fallible system.
4. **Each Determines It For Themselves.** Only leads to anarchy and the destruction of society and civilization.
5. **No Determination Is Necessary.** In effect, the same as the previous.
6. **Since Everyone’s Beliefs Are Equally Valid, *Conflict Resolution* Determines It.** At it’s core, requires the compromise of convictions, not the establishment of them.

**II. Or, Conversely:**

1. **Admit That We (and everything else) Are Created By God, Heb.3:4; 11:3**. Therefore He has the *right to rule* by *Creatorship/Ownership.*
2. **Acknowledge That His *Right to Rule* Is Exercised Through *Revelation,* John 12:46-50; and,**
3. **And Accept *Eternal* *Accountability* To Him In These Regards, Rev.20:11-15.**

**III. “But what happens in the *practical application* when we (those who accept and endeavor to live in this way) disagree about what “right” and “wrong” is?**

1. **Do we then revert back to *worldly* means/methods of determining “right” and “wrong”?** Do we return to the *most powerful,* the *most educated/enlightened,* or the *majority* making the determination? Or, do we decide instead that *no determination* can be made, or that such is unnecessary since *everyone must determine for himself* ? Or do we decide *compromise our personal convictions* on the matter to arrive at “conflict resolution” in the pursuit of peace and unity (in diversity)?
2. **Or, we could do what was done under *inspired leadership* in Acts 15:**
3. Vv.1-5, The issue at hand: what was “right” and “wrong” regarding *“It is necessary to circumcise them* (Gentile converts to Christ, PCS), *and to direct them to keep the Law of Moses.”*
4. Vv.6-7a, Be willing to *look into* to, investigate, and discuss the matter; don’t ignore or push aside *legitimate* distinctions between and efforts to determine “right” and “wrong,” (cp.1Tim.1:3-5; 4:7; 6:3-5).
5. Vv.7b-9,12, listen to *divinely-inspired testimony* (consider *apostolic example*, Phil.3:17)*.* Peter, an *inspired apostle,* reminded them of *divine declaration.*
6. V.11, *Think,* and do so *soberly* and *logically.*  *“God is not a God of confusion, but of peace,”* 1Cor.14:34. Why would He *free* Jews from the constraints of the Law through Christ, only to enslave the Gentiles to it?
7. Vv.13-18, Test conclusions/applications of “right” and “wrong” by being sure they *harmonize* with the rest of Scripture.
8. **Notice also that:**
9. The *church* (*local* in Jerusalem or *universal* otherwise) did not decide what was “right” and “wrong,” *the Holy Spirit* did so through the *divinely-guided* actions of the apostles, and by the *divinely-inspired revelation* of Scripture, vv.28,7-9,14-18.
10. The *church* (*local* in Jerusalem) was only involved in the decision of how best to *publicize* the findings, vv.22ff.
11. So, the *powerful* (even the apostles), the *most educated* (the believing Pharisees of v.5, the *majority* (the Jerusalem church), *everyone for themselves* (not Peter, Paul & Barnabas, nor James), or a *consensus* reached by *conflict resolutions* methods determined what was “right” and “wrong” in this matter- God did, v.28! Those involved simply *discovered* what was “right” by consulting Him (in this case more specifically, *the Holy Spirit*)!

**IV. Now, if you want to know what is “right” and “wrong” regarding:**

1. **Societal issues such as *homosexuality, race relations, marriage, abortion, et al,* go to *Spirit-inspired Revelation.***
2. **Church issues such *salvation, worship, apostasy,* *et al,* go to *Spirit-inspired Revelation.***
3. **Fellowship issues such as *membership requirements, membership removal, et al,* go to *Spirit-inspired Revelation*.**
4. **But please, don’t use man-made or man-contrived reasoning or methods to attempt to determine “right” and “wrong,” else we fulfill Isa.5:20-21.**