



Flip Wilson popularized the saying... The Devil Made Me Do It!!!

- In his book Chosen By Free, theologian Norman Geisler asks the question.... If the devil made you do it, then who made the devil do it?
- One of the fundamental problems of the nature of man, since the garden of Eden is that of shifting blame.
- If I can blame someone or something else for what I've done, then I can't held responsible for my actions.
- So... if I can't get a job it's because of the economy
- If I struggle with addictions it's because of poor parenting
- If I struggle with anger it's because I'm Irish
- There's always something or someone to blame – goes back to Adam

The ultimate is when we blame God... the reasoning is like this...

- If an all-knowing God knows what we are going to do before we do it
- And if He cannot be wrong
- Then how can I stop things from happening – it's going to happen regardless of what we do?
- If God is in control of everything, then why should we be blamed for anything?

Or to put the problem another way....

- If God is in control of all events, then how can I be responsible for anything that happens, even my evil actions? The devil made me do it
- This is what the Reformed or Calvinistic philosophy teaches
- I refer to it as a philosophy because it's not a scriptural view, it's a philosophical view based on one man's opinion of scripture.

But the Bible teaches that man is responsible for his own actions...

Judges 21:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

- The excuse... there was no king
- The problem... everyone did what was right in his own eyes
- The truth... God was King, but the people lost consciousness of God
- The reason... they didn't want to live life God's way
- They wanted to live like the rest of the world



- We find the nation of Israel living under condemnation, without any consciousness of God

Judges 17:1–4 (NKJV)

17 Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name was Micah. ² And he said to his mother, “The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from you, and on which you put a curse, even saying it in my ears—here *is* the silver with me; I took it.”

And his mother said, “*May you be blessed by the LORD, my son!*” ³ So when he had returned the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, “I had wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the LORD for my son, to make a carved image and a molded image; now therefore, I will return it to you.” ⁴ Thus he returned the silver to his mother. Then his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver and gave them to the silversmith, and he made it into a carved image and a molded image; and they were in the house of Micah.

Micah is typical of the man who is searching for God

- His name means “Who is Like God” which suggests he can from a religious family, but he himself did not know God
- His religion is based on superstition
- (vs. 2) Micah steals 1100 shekels of silver
- What kind of son steals from his own mother
- Knowing that his mom has pronounced a curse on the one who stole her money, Micah returns it
- It appears that Micah feared his mom’s curse – superstition
- Micah returns the 1100 shekels that she said was dedicated to the Lord for the purpose of making idols,
- She gives Micah 200 shekels and he gives it to the silversmith to make into 2 idols – a carved image and a molded image
- Mom is spiritually aware, but spiritually confused... she is Jew who worship idols

TRUTH: Religion is man’s attempt to reach God apart from God

- Man is created to worship and once he rejects God, he will seek something else to worship
- Man will always replace God with a lesser god, a god that he has formed with his own hands... that is less than himself



- Not only must he replace it with a god that is less than himself, but he must then lower himself... dehumanize himself to worship it
- It is this process of dehumanization that is at the heart of every false religion and we see it most prevalent in the way women are treated

EX: Islam is one of the most cruel religions in the world in it's treatment of women. Women aren't even allowed to show their faces. Buddhism strips the person of individuality – you must fade away into nothingness. Scientology is all about evolutionary domination – the strong survive and crush the weak. Jehovah's Witnesses are brainwashed into an extreme form of works based righteousness trying to win one of the 144,000 spots that will make it to heaven. Hinduism supports a system of human suffering where cows eat better than humans because of a twisted view of reincarnation. All religions lower man to a subhuman state.

Judges 17:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. ⁶ In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

- An ephod was worn by the high priest
- By making his son a priest, Micah completes his collection
- He has his own private gods, his own private priest, his own private interpretation of what should be done in worship

Peter warns against this...

2 Peter 1:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

EX: When I was in school of ministry there were a group of students in my class who attended with their pastor. They seemed to be on fire believers until we started the preaching lab. We started to notice their doctrine was just a little bit off. They would refer to Christians as little Christ's, but they would infer that they themselves were Jesus. They were passionate preachers, but the comments on their sheets were always – check your



doctrine. Finally, one of the students visited their church and discovered they were a full blown Religious cult. The leader, a Southern Baptist youth pastor who was influenced by Benny Hinn's brother, taught that he was Jesus in the flesh, they were little Jesus' and only he had the correct revelation from God. In his messages he would cuss them out, tell them they didn't know anything and over time he successfully brainwashed them. All of his leaders were young men who were estranged from their families and worked for his construction company.

There is a move in our country away from accountability

- It's popular today amongst churches... the independent church, not accountable outside of itself
- We read of the abuse of money, power and illicit relationships in churches where there is no accountability

I am reminded of a church that was started by a TBN preacher some years back. He used television and radio to build a large audience in a short period of time. He rented a large building and when the money poured in... the pastor took off with millions of dollars and disappeared.

- I think it's important that we as individual believers and corporately as churches are in fellowship
- Individually with a local church and corporately with a fellowship or network of other churches
- As imperfect as Calvary Chapel is, what I like about Calvary Chapel is the freedom to develop our unique identity as a community of faith and the accountability of other like-minded men of God
- Be careful of churches that lack accountability – no covering
- Even Paul was sent out from the church at Antioch.

Judges 17:7–10 (NKJV)

⁷ Now there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah; he was a Levite, and was staying there. ⁸ The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find a *place*. Then he came to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. ⁹ And Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?"

So he said to him, "I *am* a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am on my way to find a *place* to stay."



¹⁰ Micah said to him, “Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten *shekels* of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance.” So the Levite went in.

- Although Micah had already appointed his son as priest, his private religion wasn’t working for him like he had hoped
- Then comes a genuine Levite out of Benjamin and Micah thinks... now I can get the real deal and God will truly bless me.
- He offers him a job and the Levite, doing what was right in his own eyes thinks... why not?

Here’s the problem...

- Does every Levite qualify to be a priest? No. Only the sons of Aaron.
- Levites were simply to assist in the tabernacle and the temple
- Secondly... Bethlehem was not one of the 48 Levitical cities assigned by Moses... why was the Levite doing there?
- Apparently, Israel stopped supporting the temple and the Levites so they were scattered looking for work.
- Remember, they were not to work for a living but the nation was to support them to serve the Lord
- That is how far the nation of Israel had slipped from their responsibilities

Judges 18:1–3 (NKJV)

18 In those days *there was* no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day *their* inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them. ² So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, “Go, search the land.” So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. ³ While they *were* at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned aside and said to him, “Who brought you here? What are you doing in this *place*? What do you have here?”

- The Tribe of Dan was first mentioned in Judges 1:34-35 where we are told the Amorites prevented them from taking possession of their land
- Israel as a nation wasn’t able to aid Dan in taking possession of the land



- They no longer recognized God as King and this leadership vacuum crippled the nation
- Now Dan is looking for a home so they send out spies looking for a place to live.
- They stumble upon Micah and his private Levitical priest – imagine what that conversation must have been like!!!
- I'm sure the Levite must have felt like a preacher caught in a bar.
- What are you doing here? What have you done?
- So Jonathan (the Levite's name), tells them the story... hey I got this cool gig and this guy offered to pay me a great salary... why not?
- They ask the priest to ask God – where should we go to get our land?
- Vs. 6 the priest answers them, but we're not told that he even prayed
- He just says... go in peace, the presence of the Lord be with you
- He didn't say the presence of the Lord will be with you... it's was a general prayer... probably some ritual he grew up doing
- They five spies leave, travel straight north 100 miles from their original inheritance, farther north than any territory allotted to the tribes of Israel.
- They arrive at the foot of Mount Hermon in the land of the Sidonians
- It was a lush area protected by the Lebanon Mountain Range from attack from Syria or Phoenicia
- It was so secure, the Sidonians did not build any defenses and it was the source of one of the man aquifers that fed the Jordan river
- It was the perfect location and Sidonians were an easy defeat
- They go back to their home, call for immediate attack, raise an army of 600 men and set off to conquer the land.
- But on the way to battle, they stop by Micah's house to take the Levite Priest with them...

Judges 18:18–20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ When these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

¹⁹ And they said to him, "Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. *Is it* better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?" ²⁰ So the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people.



- Hey... we're making you an offer you can't refuse... so the priest leaves
- When I was working in the music business, it was amazing to me how God would always lead wherever the pay was best
- You would ask someone if they wanted to do something – let me pray about it... I'm already committed
- You would tell them how much, then they would call you back and say... I just prayed about it and I'm feeling led of God to say yes... let me make a few calls and call you right back!!!
- Micah protests and the armies of Dan basically tell him to back down or be sorry... so Micah backs down
- They go on to conquer the Sidonians and Dan moves into the land that God didn't give to them

Judges 18:30–31 (NKJV)

³⁰ Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. ³¹ So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

When we go to Israel, one of the places we will visit is Tel-Dan

- At Tel-Dan you will see the spring that gushes out of the ground, the lush forest and one of the largest altars used for the worship of Baal in the nation of Israel – it's a beautiful area
- But Dan is also known as a center of idolatry... it started right here
- Genesis 49:17 it is prophesied of Dan – Dan shall be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider shall fall backward.
- Exodus 31:6 & 38:23 tell us that Dan was a tribe of gifted artisans, engravers, designers of jewelry and clothes and yet it's gifts were used to worship sexuality, intellect and sensual pleasure – much like today.
- You can look at the fashion industry and wonder... what would it have been like if Dan would have never given in to idolatry?

Now we come to one of the most troubling stories in the Old Testament

- It is the picture of a nation that is socially, morally and politically corrupt



- It reminds me of many cities in California that are declaring bankruptcy due to corruption – cities like Stockton and San Jose.
- The cities can't afford police protection, so the citizens are putting iron bars on their windows to protect themselves from criminals and gangs.
- They live inside their homes like caged animals

Judges 19:1–4 (NKJV)

19 And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. ² But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months. ³ Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her *and* bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him. ⁴ Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.

The set up of this story is wrong on so many levels...

- What is a Levite doing living in the remote mountains of Ephraim?
- Only people trying to get away from something live in the remote mountains... like people who live in Julian or Arrowhead
- What is he doing with a concubine from Bethlehem?
- Then she leaves him to set up a brothel in her father's house in Bethlehem and it took him 4 months to go get her.
- Obviously her dad was making money off her so her dad didn't want them to leave and so he talked them into staying five additional nights
- Finally, the Levite doesn't want to stay anymore and leaves with his servant and the concubine in the afternoon.
- By night fall, they arrive at Jebus (the ancient name for Jerusalem) and his servant says... let's stop here
- The Levite says... no way dude, I'm not staying with a bunch of foreigners... this guy was a hypocrite and a bigot.
- So they keep going until they get to Gibeah which is in the tribe of Benjamin and there an old man shows them hospitality by giving them a meal to eat and a place to stay.



Judges 19:22–30 (NKJV)

²² As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house *and* beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him *carnally!*” (HOMOSEXUALITY)

THE MAN SAYS... TAKE MY CONCUBINE INSTEAD

²⁵ But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought *her* out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

²⁶ Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man’s house where her master *was*, till it was light. (SHE DIED)

²⁹ When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. ³⁰ And so it was that all who saw it said, “No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!”

You could have called this town Sodom and Gomorrah

- They physically abuse the concubine until she dies and the Levite dismembers her body and sends it out as a call to war
- All of Israel goes to war against the Benjamites for this act of cruelty
- In Chapter 20, Israel arrives at Gibeah and they command the Benjamites to deliver the perverted men who killed the concubine
- The Benjamites refuse to give them up and assemble an army of 26,000 men and 700 special forces men who are left handed – Civil War
- Keep in mind, Benjamin means son of my right hand
- God tells Israel to send Judah first to attack Benjamin – all of Israel goes
- It’s subtle, but they are still not listening to God – God said send Judah not all Israel - 22,000 Israelites are killed in battle
- They go back to God – what’s going on? Should we do this again
- God says do it again the next day and 18,000 Israelites are killed
- The third time the entire nation goes to God – they’re weeping, fasting, offering burnt offerings and peace offerings – they’re humbled
- This time Eleazar the High priest inquires of the Lord and the Lord says... I will deliver them into your hands
- What was the difference? Read the book of Leviticus
- In Leviticus, God gave clear instructions to Israel concerning how they were to approach Him – but they lost the consciousness of God



- They forgot how to seek the Lord, how to worship God
- It cost them 40,000 lives before they got the message
- Our nation is headed towards a moral and spiritual collapse
- I wonder what it will take for America to return to the Lord?
- Israel, now operating under God's favor, defeats the Benjamites, 25,000 die and 600 try to escape but the armies of Israel track them all down

Judges 21:1–3 (NKJV)

21 Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife." ² Then the people came to the house of God, and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly, ³ and said, "O LORD God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe *missing* in Israel?"

- Israel, out of disgust makes an oath that they later regret
- If they refuse to allow the Benjaminites to inter-marry, they will cease to exist... but Israel made a vow that made it impossible for Benjamin to rebuild (Vs. 15 says the Lord made a void in the tribes of Israel)
- The elders of the tribes of Israel get together to decide how to keep this from happening
- They come up with a work around – we made an oath not to give them our women, but nothing says they can't take them
- Every year, all Israel gathers at Shiloh to celebrate Yom Kippur
- This coming year, have the men of Benjamin hide in the woods and when the young women go out from the vineyard to do their dances
- The Benjamites can catch a wife and we've kept our oath because we didn't give our daughters to them, they took them from us.

Judges 21:23–25 (NKJV)

²³ And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them. ²⁴ So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance. ²⁵ In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.