

# God, Country, and Me

*Isaiah 46:9-10*

*“I am God and there is no other;  
I am God and there is none like me.  
I make known the end from the beginning,  
from ancient times, what is still to come.  
I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that  
I please.”*

*April 29<sup>th</sup>*

## **Tolerance: Would God Tolerate Imus?**

Topical

### **GETTING THE BIG PICTURE**

Recently, the shock and horror which gripped our society was perpetrated by a certain “Shock Jock” who has been known for his intemperate ways. In fact, Don Imus has been denigrating people for over 30 years. While seemingly, and completely, remorseful, many called for his dismissal. In an era where judging others is taboo and biblical injunctions like, “let he is without sin cast...” “Judge not lest you...” are thrown around by those who heed not the complete exhortations bible, why now is there a call to rid these types of shows, and people, from our society? Where are tolerance, free speech, and acceptance? How does one go about divining what is over the line and what is not? And what is tolerance? More importantly, is tolerance always a good thing? Or maybe, just maybe, it has a complicit role in the traumas to our country. So we ask the question: What does God tolerate? And why? To answer these questions we turn to a dark day in the life of His people, Israel. Be forewarned: this story is not for the faint of heart. It is a sad account of how a nation met its limit of tolerance and expressed it through shock and horror.

### *Optional Readings*

1 Kings 3: 7 - 11

A humble prayer; a precious answer.

### **GETTING INTO THE TEXT**

*Study Day(s)*

**READ & OBSERVE: A Heathen City - Genesis 19: 1 - 29**

Write down anything you find interesting or unique about this passage.

### **ANSWER**

**A Godly People? : Judges 19: 1 - 30**

1. The first sentence of this text tries to convey the “state of the union”. What is it? Can you find other places in the book of Judges with this same phrase? What are the contexts? Why is this important for the reader to know?

### **A Family in Turmoil**

2. The first ten verses deal with a pattern of tolerance, see how many you can find. Try to explain why these appeasements were made.
3. Jebus was an enclave of people who were supposed to be expelled by the Israelites when they entered the Promise Land. However, they were difficult to dislodge. What was it that kept the Levite from tolerating a night's stay in Jebus? What do you think he was looking for?

### **A Town in Turmoil**

4. Hospitality in the near east was no small detail. How much more with those who were kin? What are some of the first observations that can be made from v.15 about the town? Does anything strike about the conversation with the "old man"? What wouldn't the old man tolerate?
5. As night falls, the old man's fear materializes. As gently as possible, give your reaction to this horrid scene. The old man, his virgin daughters, the Levite, and his concubine: what is everybody being asked to tolerate?

### **A Nation in Turmoil**

6. The Levite's reaction, was it an overreaction? Why do you think he did this? Why was this act so intolerable to the nation of Israel? How did it come to this?

## **GETTING TO THE HEART**

### ***Application Day***

As with all sin, it is a process. Seldom do we decide to just do wrong. Generally, it is a long slow slide. Most often it begins with tolerating things in our lives we should not. Can you look back over your life and see things which you tolerated only to have them control all future decisions and actions? As we have seen, this story started with a family, led to a town, and finally became the problem of a nation. Toleration is both good and bad. However, it is only a step in a direction; good or bad! Are there things you see our nation has tolerated only to have them weaken us?

Make a list of 5 things you tolerate in life (besides brussels sprouts), are they moving you towards personal changes for the good or the bad? For the *really* daring, ask someone who knows you: Do you see things in my life I shouldn't tolerate? Act on what you're told, and maybe, just maybe, you'll change a family, town, a nation.