

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **The Books Of Samuel: God's Shift Of Israel From Apostasy Under The Judges To David's Reign**

#### **I. 1 Samuel: From Samuel To The Death Of Saul**

#### **N. Biblically Handling Oppressively Selfish Leadership**

#### **(1 Samuel 14:24-52)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A lot of leaders in today's world are selfish, what is proving to be an oppressive burden for their subordinates:

(1) Charles Krauthammer's piece, "The two-part rebellion" (Republican-American, July 23, 2016, p. 6A), claimed that at the recent Republican National Convention, "Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell . . . and House Speaker Paul Ryan . . . made clear that if [Donald] Trump wins" the election, "they are ready to cooperate. And if Trump loses, they are ready to inherit" the party's mantle in favor of their own future political agendas. (brackets ours)

Also, Senator "Ted Cruz" failed to endorse Mr. Trump, what would have had "a stronger claim to conscience had he not obsequiously accommodated himself to Trump during the first six months of the campaign." (Ibid.)

(2) The Democrats also had their selfishly oppressive leader issues at their national convention: last week, "19,000 hacked emails published by Wilileaks appeared to show top officials at the . . . Democratic National Committee working to tip the scales toward Clinton" versus Bernie Sanders. (Ken Thomas and Kathleen Hennessey, "Boos and jeers: Dem convention roiled by emails, chairwoman's exit," msn.com, July 25, 2016)

The media noted Mrs. Clinton then hired the convention chairwoman who exited the convention over it all!

(3) The problem affects the current administration: though Mr. Trump won the Republican nomination with the platform that the immigration system is broken and America has slipped from its past greatness, the President simply dismissed Trump's platform, claiming "conditions in the U. S. are better today than they were when President Reagan was in office" and the "'immigration is much less a problem than it was . . . when I came in as president.'" (Jessie Hellman, "Obama slams Trump speech: Can't make decisions based on fear," msn.com, July 21, 2016)

With all due respect, for the President simply to dismiss Mr. Trump's platform without giving a clarifying explanation when millions voted in the primaries for Trump due to his platform is selfishly to oppress many voters! Indeed, I heard one nationwide radio talk show host express his complete exasperation over the matter!

Need: *So, we ask, "With leaders today often being oppressively self-centered, what does God direct us to do?!"*

#### **I. When Saul became king, he REPEATEDLY exhibited SELFISHNESS in his role as king (as follows):**

- A. In 1 Samuel 13:1-4, Saul grabbed the spotlight of attention from his son Jonathan who had just defeated the Philistine garrison at Geba, blowing a trumpet throughout all Israel to announce that "**Saul**" had defeated the garrison, and calling all Israel to follow "**Saul**" in battle against the Philistine occupational forces.
- B. In 1 Samuel 13:12 when Saul explained to Samuel why he had unbiblically performed a sacrifice, he told of his fear of the enemy threat to **himself** (*'ali*, "to me," Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 423), not to the nation around him.
- C. Then in 1 Samuel 14:24 ESV, Saul had "laid and oath on" his subordinates, forbidding any of them to eat food until "**I** am avenged on **my** enemies," burdening his entire army for the sake of personal revenge!

#### **II. That SELFISHNESS proved to be VERY OPPRESSIVE for everyone else as well as for Saul himself:**

- A. Saul's selfish prohibition against eating for his army put the whole army at risk in combat, 1 Sam. 14:24, 31:
  1. Though God had put the Philistines to flight by the attack of Jonathan and his armor bearer, since Saul's army had gone without food for a time (1 Sam. 14:24), they were weak during the battle, 1 Samuel 14:31.
  2. That put their lives at risk and limited what success they could have in even chasing the enemy!
- B. Saul's selfish prohibition against eating for his army became a stumblingblock for his men, 1 Sam. 14:32-33:
  1. When Saul's famished army slew fleeing Philistines and encountered their spoil of livestock, they were so hungry that they slew some of the animals and started to eat the flesh with the blood in it in violation of the Law at Leviticus 17:10-14; 1 Sam. 14:31-33a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Sam. 14:32.
  2. Saul built an altar to the Lord to have the men kill their animals and drain the blood there for eating, but this sin had been instigated by Saul's unwise oath against initially letting his men eat, 1 Sam. 14:33b-35.
- C. Saul's selfish prohibition against eating for his army nearly cost his son his life, 1 Samuel 14:24, 27, 43-45:
  1. Saul had given his prohibition against eating anything when Jonathan and his armor bearer were absent from the army camp so that they did not know about it, 1 Samuel 14:24, 27a.
  2. Accordingly, when Jonathan became hungry and found some wild honey on the battlefield, he tasted some of it and was refreshed so as to continue fighting, thinking he had done no harm, 1 Samuel 14:27b. c.

3. Saul had invoked God's Name in taking his oath, so Jonathan's violation of it kept God from answering Saul when he sought God's guidance in battle, and Saul learned by lot that Jonathan violated it, 1 Samuel 14:37-42.
  4. Saul then claimed that his son Jonathan should be executed, but the army kept Saul from killing him since God had used Jonathan that day to start the victorious rout of the Philistines, 1 Samuel 14:44-45.
- D. Saul's selfish prohibition against eating for his army cost Israel a greater victory, 1 Samuel 14:30, 46:
- a. Saul had initially wanted to pursue the fleeing Philistines for an even greater victory (1 Sam. 14:36), but the incident involving the threat to Jonathan's life and the men of Saul's army coming to Jonathan's rescue apparently dampened the army's morale, putting an end to the pursuit of the enemy, 1 Samuel 14:44-46.
  - b. Even Jonathan complained that his father's unwise prohibition against letting the army eat before the battle had cost the army an opportunity for greater victory over the Philistines, 1 Samuel 14:29-30.
- E. Saul's selfish prohibition against eating for his army to a degree hurt Saul's leadership, 1 Sam. 14:45-46: when the army refused to let him execute Jonathan because God had used Jonathan to rout of the Philistines, Saul stopped pursuing the enemy, the incident producing a weakening of Saul's leadership influence on the army.
- F. Saul's selfish prohibition against eating for his army cost all Israel ongoing distress, 1 Sam. 14:47-52; 8:11-18:
1. 1 Samuel 14:47-51 tells of Saul's later numerous battles with Gentile foes all around Israel (Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to 1 Sam. 14:47), and 1 Samuel 14:52 explains that he kept on inducting more men into his army.
  2. Such efforts betray Saul's concern to overcome his loss of leadership influence that began by his army's refusing to let him kill Jonathan, with Saul trying to recover that lost influence via more victories in war!
  3. [Note how this activity fulfilled Samuel's warning against what the king would do in 1 Samuel 8:11-18!]
- G. Also, Deuteronomy 32:35 taught that vengeance was **God's** to perform (cf. Romans 12:19), so for Saul to form a curse for the sake of gaining personal vengeance was sin, to his loss of God's blessing, Deut. 28:15ff.
- III. The CAUSE of Saul's SELFISHNESS was his FAILURE to HEED SCRIPTURE on his ROLE as KING:**
- A. In Deuteronomy 17:16-17, God had directed Israel's king **not** to rely on human power for national defense.
  - B. Instead, he was to read Scripture (v. 18-19), and that would make him (1) humble before God and his subjects (v. 20a) (2) that he might heed God's commands fully (v. 20b), (3) resulting in divine blessing (v. 20c).
  - C. Applied to Saul here, had he read Scripture, (1) he would have relied on God to attack the enemy, (2) eating regular meals when they encountered the enemy spoil and thus (3) fully routing the enemy and (4) preserving his leadership influence! (5) Israel would have been more relaxed in not having to face so much more war under an insecure king, and (6) Saul would not have formed his unbiblical, oppressive oath for vengeance!
- IV. Then, in CONTRAST to SAUL, JONATHAN and his armor bearer HEADED SCRIPTURE and DIVINE PRECEDENT (as we learned last week) to attack the enemy, thus becoming a great blessing to Israel and enjoying deliverance from the harmfully selfish king Saul by grateful colleagues in the army.**

***Lesson:*** (1) *By failing as a king to immerse his mind and heart in Scripture, Saul turned selfish, operating in his own might and wisdom, hampering God's blessing for himself and for everyone else in Israel.* (2) *Conversely, Saul's subordinate Jonathan heeded Scripture and God's precedents, being a blessing and enjoying God's blessing.*

***Application:*** (1) *May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16.* (2) *If we are a leader, (a) may we immerse our minds and hearts in Scripture, (b) rely by faith on God for each step we take (c) to avoid oppressive selfishness with God's blessing.* (3) *If we are subject to a leader who is oppressively selfish, may we like Jonathan (a) trust God and heed His Word (1 Samuel 14:1, 6-14) that He might use us in a semi-leadership role like Jonathan, (b) seeing God then protect us from the oppressively selfish leader's effects so we can fulfill God's will as did Jonathan.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our sermon introduction, we noted that many people face oppressively selfish leaders especially in today's political realm, what can tempt many subordinates to experience maddening unrest within. However, immersing our minds in Scripture leads us to overcome this temptation (as follows):

In Philippians 4:6-9 ESV, Paul directed believers in Christ to (1) be anxious for nothing, but to let their requests be made known unto God that His peace that passes all understanding might guard their hearts and minds in Christ. (2) Paul also taught them to think on what was true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, of excellence and was praiseworthy, and (3) to practice what Paul practiced in his life so that the God of peace might be with them.

Applying these truths equip us to live in peace in the face of maddeningly selfish, oppressive leaders!

**May we trust in Christ to be saved. Then, may we immerse our minds in Scripture to be used of God to edify like Jonathan even amid his father's harmful selfish rule, becoming a blessing and being blessed of God.**