

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

O. Heeding An Immutably Righteous God In A Morally Corrupt World

(1 Samuel 15:1-35)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

The world today is full of encroaching moral corruption, and we need to know how to deal with it, a fact we can readily illustrate just from the realm of our national politics (as follows):

(1) The Democratic Party arguably set up the Republican nominee for president, Donald Trump, baiting his morally corrupt tendency to attack those who attack him by having Mr. and Mrs. Khizr and Ghazala Khan, Muslim parents of a fallen American soldier, attack Trump in a speech at the Democratic Convention. Mr. Trump's expected reaction elicited a round of denunciations when he said that Mrs. Khan silently stood by her husband as he gave the speech since "She . . . maybe . . . wasn't allowed to have anything to say," being a Muslim woman. (Lisa Lerer and Jonathan Lemire, AP, "Criticism of soldier's parents roils campaign," Republican-American, August 1, 2016, p. 4A)

(2) This set-up was arguably meant to shift public attention from the notorious corruption of Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee: Jay Ambrose (Ibid., July 29, 2016, p. 8A, "The future under Clinton"), upon recalling "the history of the Clinton Foundation, super-dollar speech reimbursements and a refusal to turn over tapes of talks before donors" and "distant whoppers along with more recent email deceptions," asserted the "biggest hope with Clinton as president may be that she has been lying about what she really believes and will go in a different direction."

(3) However, the moral corruption on this matter runs much deeper: Mrs. Khan responded to Trump's critique of her silence during her husband's speech, writing in her op-ed in last Sunday's Washington Post that "(i)f he studied the real Islam and Koran, all the ideas he gets from terrorists would change, because terrorism is a different religion." ("Ghazala Khan: Trump criticized my silence. He knows nothing about true sacrifice," washingtonpost.com, July 31, 2016) In view of the historical context, the reader of Mrs. Khan's op-ed is left to think that Islam honors women, that it is only Islamist terrorists who oppress women like Donald Trump implied in his critique of Mrs. Khan's silence.

Yet, the "Quran" that Mrs. Khan suggested one read, at Surah 4:24 states: "Forbidden for you are women already married, except such as your right hands possess. Allah has enjoined this on you." (Nabeel Qureshi, Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus, 2014, p. 242) Authoritative traditions in Islam, Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and Sunan Abu Daud, claim this Surah directs Muslim men who capture married women "to have intercourse with women whose lives had just been destroyed, sometimes in the presence of their husbands," Ibid., p. 243-244. Robert Spencer in The Truth About Muhammad, 2006, p. 134, wrote, "The number of women victimized by this across the Islamic centuries cannot be calculated; and even today, women are all too often treated as commodities all across the Islamic world."

Thus, the complicity of the mainstream media and politicians with Mrs. Khan's view that she presumably gave in ignorance of authoritative writings in Islam, her view that true Islam only honors women, and that to advance Mrs. Clinton politically, does a colossal injustice to the many women abused in Islam and to the American public.

Need: *So, we ask, "How does God want us to handle the world's pervasive depth of moral corruption?!"*

- I. Israel in 1 Samuel 15:1-11 was afflicted by a king who was becoming increasingly morally corrupt:**
- A. God called Saul through the prophet Samuel to administer punishment upon the Amalekites for an old sin He had promised to administer against them once Israel was settled in the Promised Land, 1 Samuel 15:1-3:
 - 1. During Israel's Exodus when she was en route to the Promised Land, the Amalekites attacked Israel's stragglers in disrespect for her people and for her God, 1 Samuel 15:1-2 with Deuteronomy 25:17-18.
 - 2. Thus, God told Saul via Samuel that the time had come for that punishment to be administered, that Saul was to lead Israel to exterminate the Amalekites and their animals in holy war, 1 Sam. 15:3; Deut. 25:19.
 - B. Saul was fully aware of that previous Amalekite sin as seen in his preparation to heed God, 1 Sam. 15:4-6: he recalled how the Kenites, nomadic Midianites related to Moses, had helped Israel during the Exodus in contrast to the Amalekites (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Sam. 15:6; Numbers 10:29-33), so he urged the Kenites to depart from living among the Amalekites so he could wage holy war against Amalek.
 - C. However, Saul failed to heed God *exactly*, only **partly** administering His decreed judgment, 1 Samuel 15:7-9:
 - 1. Saul **did** lead Israel to slay Amalekites from northwest Arabia nearly to Egypt (Ibid., ftn. to 1 Sam. 15:7).
 - 2. However, he with his army spared Agag, the Amalekite king, and the best of the Amalekite livestock while utterly destroying all the rest, especially the weak and lame, 1 Samuel 15:8-9.

- D. God told Samuel that Saul had violated His command, making God sorry (*niham*, "be sorry," B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 636-637; this is **not** a change "in God's nature, but an expression of sorrow"; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to 1 Sam. 15:11) that He had made Saul king, news that grieved Samuel, 1 Samuel 15:10-11.
- II. Samuel then confronted Saul about his partial obedience, but instead of repenting, Saul lied, claiming he had heeded God, and then rationalized his disobedience, trying to make it acceptable, 1 Samuel 15:12-15.**
- III. Accordingly, Samuel gave God's response to Saul's sin, explaining that his rebellion was as the vile sin of witchcraft, that the Lord had decided to replace Saul with a better man as king, 1 Samuel 15:16-23.**
- IV. Saul finally truthfully admitted he had yielded in fear to the people in failing fully to heed the Lord, and he begged Samuel to forgive him and to worship with him (1 Sam. 15:24-25), but Samuel said that God had firmly decided to reject Saul since God was IMMUTABLE, unchanging in morals, 1 Sam. 15:26-29:**
- A. Saul's "fudging" had begun in a previous episode, and had blossomed into a full departure from heeding God:
1. Back in 1 Samuel 14:24 when Saul had made his reckless oath that none of his army could eat until he had been avenged of his Philistine foes, that oath had led to his son, Jonathan coming under his curse when the innocent Jonathan who was uninformed of his father's curse, had eaten some honey, 1 Samuel 14:27-29.
 2. When Saul learned of Jonathan's violation and sought to kill him, the army halted him, for God had used Jonathan to give them victory, 1 Sam. 14:42-45. Saul thus lost some leadership influence, 1 Sam. 14: 46.
 3. With his leadership influence somewhat curtailed, when Saul then led his army against the Amalekites and his men wanted to save the best of the Amalekite livestock, Saul was afraid to counter their will (1 Samuel 15:24), leading to Saul's disobedience of God and consequent rejection as king by the Lord, 1 Sam. 15:26.
- B. Saul tried to get Samuel to retract his demotion as king (1 Sam. 15:25), but Samuel refused (1 Sam. 15:26-28) explaining that God was immutable, unchanging in His morals unlike the morally shifting Saul, 1 Sam. 15:29:
1. Samuel called God the "Strength" (KJV) of Israel, what translates the Hebrew noun *nesah*, or "strength, victory, perpetuity," the combination each of these ideas into one to imply God's unchanging nature, His immutability. (H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 593; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to 1 Samuel 15:29)
 2. In other words, Israel's God was not susceptible to change regarding His moral standards like Saul had changed over his short lifespan: God **still** wanted the Amalekites totally destroyed though He had waited hundreds of years before administering that judgment, but Saul's failure to respect God's unchanging morals due to his own shifting standards due to his failings as king led God to reject Saul as king!
- V. Samuel then exemplified how to deal with moral corruption and heed an immutably upright God, v. 30-35:**
- A. First, Samuel graciously worshiped God with Saul to guard Saul's honor before the elders, 1 Samuel 15:30-31.
- B. However, Samuel then slew Agag in fulfillment of the immutably righteous God's will, 1 Samuel 15:32-33.
- C. Third, Samuel parted company with the morally compromising Saul, mourning for him in personal grief, but separating himself for the rest of his life from having fellowship with Saul, 1 Samuel 15:34-35.

Lesson: (1) *When Saul turned morally corrupt and failed fully to heed God, He rejected Saul as king.* (2) *Samuel exemplified the godly response to such corruption by aligning with the morally immutable, unchanging God of the Bible to (a) be kind to wayward Saul (b) while he himself heeded God's Word (c) and parted fellowship with Saul.*

Application: (1) *May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16.* (2) *In facing moral corruption, (a) may we rely on the Holy Spirit to live uprightly (Rom. 8:3-4; Gal. 5:16-23) and (b) be kind to the corrupt, but (c) heed God fully (d) while parting fellowship with the morally corrupt in line with the holiness of an immutably righteous Lord.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

After Donald Trump suggested that Mrs. Ghazala Khan kept silent when her husband gave a speech since she was a Muslim woman and she had then written a reply in a Washington Post op-ed, claiming, "If he studied the real Islam and Koran, all the ideas he gets from terrorists would change, because terrorism is a different religion" (Ibid., washingtonpost.com), I was bothered at the corruptive error being implied regarding women in it all. As we noted in our sermon introduction, Islam's holy book, the Quran, encourages the wicked abuse of many women, Ibid., Spencer.

We thus apply Samuel's example in 1 Samuel 15:30-35 on dealing with moral corruption: (1) with regard to Muslims, (a) we treat all Muslims with kindness like Samuel treated Saul, (b) but we heed the Bible on its prohibition of all forms of immorality and (c) have no spiritual fellowship with those in the Islamic faith (d) while we seek to follow God's leading in evangelizing all who are in that faith.

(2) On general moral corruption, (a) we are kind, (b) but obey God (c) and part fellowship with the corruption.
May we trust in Christ for salvation, and then live aligned with the morally immutable God of the Bible.