

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

S. Yielding To God's Plan That We Face Unwanted Relationship Conflicts

(1 Samuel 17:55-18:9)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We are called of God to try to "live peaceably with all men" in Romans 12:18, but sometimes difficult relationship conflicts come our way regardless of our best efforts to avoid them:

(1) At the international level, Kevin Freking's Associated Press story, "Obama: Extremists can't win" (Republican-American, September 12, 2016, p. 41) reported on President Barack Obama's observance of the fifteenth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 Islamist terrorist attacks on America in which the President said, "(E)xtremist groups such as the Islamic State group and al-Qaida know they can never drive down the U. S., so they focus on trying to instill fear in hopes of trying to get Americans to change how they live." He added, "We know that our diversity, our patchwork heritage is not a weakness, it is still and always will be one of our greatest strengths," (Ibid.)

However, the next page (Ibid., p. 5A) had another Associated Press story, "Muslims gather for climax of hajj pilgrimage," that told of the annual September 11 climb of Mount Arafat by 2 million Muslims outside Mecca "where the Prophet Muhammad delivered his final sermon some 1,400 years ago . . . calling for equality and for Muslims to unite." Recalling that the 911 terrorist attacks were committed by men who heeded Muhammad's teachings and example (Robert Spencer, The Truth About Muhammad, 2006, p. 13), and that their ideology runs opposite the President's recent claim that America's "'diversity, our patchwork heritage . . . is still and always will be one of our greatest strengths'" (Ibid., Freking) means that our nation faces unresolved, serious conflict with many in Islam!

(2) We face unwanted conflicts at the personal level, too: on the average of about once a week, people in our congregation either face unwanted conflicts with others or they are burdened about other people who do.

Need: So we ask, "If I try to live at peace with others but I still face relationship conflict, what would God advise?"

- I. Immediately after he had led Israel to victory by slaying Goliath, David enjoyed supportive interaction with Saul and Saul's servants and a close friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan, 1 Samuel 17:55-18:5:**
 - A. David's slaying of Goliath led king Saul's general Abner to bring David to meet Saul where the king learned that David's father was Jesse the Bethlehemite, 1 Samuel 17:55-58.
 - B. Saul's son Jonathan also then met David and loved him as his own soul so that Jonathan made a covenant with David and gave him his princely robe, his clothes, his sword, his bow and his belt, 1 Samuel 18:1, 3-4.
 - C. Saul no longer let David return to his father's home, but kept him in his royal court (1 Samuel 18:2), and wherever Saul sent David he succeeded so that Saul set him over the men of war in Israel, 1 Samuel 18:5a.
 - D. The servants of Saul also accepted David in his rising role in Saul's court, 1 Samuel 18:5b.
- II. However, when Israel's women sang praises to the victors, giving greater praise to David than to Saul, it permanently turned Saul against David, producing an unwanted conflict for David, 1 Samuel 18:6-9:**
 - A. Israel's army with Saul and David were returning from their victory over the Philistines when the women of Israel came out from all of their cities to honor them, singing and dancing with musical instruments, and they sang that Saul had slain his thousands, and David his **ten** thousands, 1 Samuel 18:6-7.
 - B. When these women unwisely publicly gave greater honor to a subordinate than to the king, it infuriated Saul and left him thinking that David might unseat him as king, 1 Samuel 18:8.
 - C. 1 Samuel 18:9 thus claims Saul "eyed" (*'en*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 745) David, he looked enviously upon him (Ibid.), from that day "and onwards" (*hal'ah*, Ibid., p. 229), or for the rest of Saul's life.
 - D. Saul's relentless, jealous hatred of David would lead him to pursue David for many years in repeat efforts to try to kill him (cf. 1 Samuel 19:18-27:1), leaving David to face unwanted grief in being hated by his king, parted from his beloved friend Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:41-42) and separated from his family and friends.
- III. Nevertheless, this conflict David faced had been arranged by God to achieve His perfect long-term plan:**
 - A. The Lord Himself had set in motion the spiritual dynamics that then led to Saul's hatred of David:
 1. In 1 Samuel 16:1, the Lord had ordered His prophet Samuel to cease grieving over Saul, but to fill his horn with oil and go to Bethlehem to anoint David as king since God had rejected Saul from being king.
 2. God's Holy Spirit then came upon David at his anointing to stay with him for the rest of his life (1 Sam. 16:13), but the same Holy Spirit left Saul and an evil spirit from God terrorized him, 1 Samuel 16:14.

3. Consequently, Saul began a long decline in power and influence (1 Samuel 16:15-17) while David enjoyed increasing success and development as a person and as a leader, 1 Samuel 16:18-23 et al.
 4. David's ongoing rise and Saul's continuing decline kept fueling Saul's jealousy and hatred, what David could not control because God Himself had set the spiritual dynamics in motion to produce that conflict.
- B. Just **WHY** God arranged for David to face such conflict becomes clear in viewing the Lord's long-term plan:
1. First, since switching from one dynasty to another would normally produce a costly civil war in the Ancient Near East, God wanted to spare Israel such a loss of life by arranging for David to face Saul's hatred while Saul gradually declined and David gradually rose in power. Eventually, all Israel, even Saul's relatives and tribesmen, switched their allegiance over from Saul to follow David as their king:
 - a. After Saul's death when all Israel's people finally came to David to coronate him as king, they admitted that David had been the one even in Saul's reign who had led Israel to victory against her foes, and that his leadership success fit God's promise that he was to shepherd the people of Israel, 1 Chronicles 11:1-2 NIV.
 - b. Thus, all the time that David was running from Saul, there had been a gradual, relatively stable shift in the allegiance of Israel's people from Saul over to David, what came to full bloom after Saul's death.
 2. Second, to spare Israel a second disastrous king after Saul, God made **sure** that David learned lessons of faith and humility, what was required of Israel's kings in Deuteronomy 17:18-20, and trials did this well:
 - a. Though Israel's kings were to learn humble reliance on God by daily exposure to Scripture (Deut. 17:18-20), Israel could not afford to have a second failed king after Saul, so the Lord made David's training **sure** through **trials** where he was **forced** humbly to rely on God to become a good king (cf. 2 Timothy 2:12a).
 - b. Some of David's psalms thus record (1) his pilgrimage of learning to trust God while fleeing from his foes, cf. Psalms 56; 59; 63; etc. Also, (2) David by repeat trials learned to check his temptation to avenge himself on Saul in 1 Samuel 24:1-5 with 1 Samuel 26:1-25 and (3) David learned in 1 Samuel 25:1-44 to wait humbly on God to avenge him of Nabal's injustice like Deuteronomy 32:35 in Scripture directed.
 3. Third, the Biblical record of David's life events and psalms are an exemplary guide to believers in all later ages so that God still makes mileage out of David's sufferings at the hand of Saul, cf. Romans 15:4.

Lesson: *God set in motion the spiritual dynamics that led to David's facing unjust, painful, long-term conflict from king Saul (1) to save Israel a costly civil war by letting David suffer, (2) to force-feed David by trials lessons of faith in God and humility in relationships to make him into a good king and (3) to provide believers in all ensuing ages a Biblical example in David's sufferings on maturing in the Lord through unwanted, unjust trials.*

Application: *If facing undesirable conflicts with others, (1) may we trust in Christ to be saved and be indwelt by the empowering Holy Spirit of God, John 3:16; Galatians 3:14. (2) May we then trust that God is letting our conflicts occur for His purposes that may include (a) maturing us into humility and a life of faith in God via trials for future service, (b) teaching others who witness our trials to cease following false leaders and to follow the godly instead (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:19) or (c) to example to weak or less mature believers how to handle unwanted conflicts.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In illustration of this sermon, we note how the example of the humble honesty of the translators of the original 1611 King James Version does us a great service in fielding unwanted conflict from "King James Only" promoters!

A segment of Bible-believing Christians today known as "King James Only" advocates, oppose many others in their claim that the only God-inspired, inerrant **version** of the Bible is the 1611 King James Version. (James R. White, The King James Only Controversy, 1995, p. III). Since we at Nepaug Church use the New International Version in our pews, the "King James Only" people oppose us, what is for us an unwanted conflict. However, in the preface of their 1611 version, entitled "The Translators to the Reader," the King James Version translators themselves claimed a "'variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures.'" (Ibid., p. 72, 76-77)

By this claim, these translators revealed they were humble men who had learned through life's trials that they did not know everything about Bible translation, that they never considered their translation to be the only translation of the Bible that God wanted people to read! If they never intended their translation be the only one we were to read, then by their own testimony, we must reject the "King James Only" position in favor of using -- to cite the KJV translators themselves -- a "'variety of Translations'" as "'profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures'"!

If we face unwanted conflicts with others, may we first trust in Christ to become a believer in Christ and be indwelt by the Holy Spirit's power. Then, may we view such conflicts as God's assignments, and rely on the Holy Spirit to follow the example of David to learn the lessons of faith and humility that God might use us!