

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

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

#### **II. 2 Samuel: The Reign Of David Over Israel**

##### **Y. God's Program Of Overcoming Dysfunction**

###### **(2 Samuel 23:1-39)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Dysfunctional behavior, what Webster's Dictionary defines as impaired or abnormal conduct, abounds today:

(1) It occurs at the national level: Michael Barone's op-ed, "The costs of identity politics" in the Republican-American, August 20, 2017, p. 14A, told of the Charlottesville, Virginia conflict where "(w)hite nationalists and neo-Nazis uttering vile racism demonstrated against removal of a Robert E. Lee statue. One drove a car into a crowd -- killing one young woman and injuring about 20 others" and "(m)any so-called antifa (anti-facist) counter-demonstrators, some disguised with masks, attacked the Lee supporters with deadly weapons."

However, it was "President Trump" who "was widely criticized -- by many conservatives, as well as liberals -- for his Aug. 12 statement condemning 'this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides' without specifically denouncing white nationalism." So, on Monday, August 14th, "Trump, obviously under pressure," named the "KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and other hate groups" in his follow-up denunciation only to be "hectorated by reporters for" also "condemning the 'alt-left' demonstrators . . ."

Last Wednesday, incredible fallout from this continued: Brad Davis on "The Talk of Connecticut" reported that ESPN reassigned sports announcer Robert Lee, an Oriental, to another job lest listeners be offended by his name!

(2) It occurs at the state level: the editorial, "Mayor Drew's Misconception" in the August 10, 2017 issue of the same paper (Ibid., p. 6A) mentioned the "perpetual dysfunction" of state government, and Chris Powell's column, "End of the 'hold-harmless' era" (Ibid., August 9, 2017, p. 6A) illustrated it, noting that "for 40 years, Connecticut has poured more money into the schools of poor cities and towns, only to change nothing except their cost."

(3) It occurs at the grassroots level: Mr. Powell added that "the main detriment of educational performance is not money spent by schools, but children's upbringing at home. On average, kids living in poverty with neglectful or incompetent parents always will perform poorly; and on average, kids living in decent homes with some books and attentive parents always will perform better." (Ibid.)

(4) It occurs in evangelical circles: one of our deacons recently reported that he attended a wedding last month where a significant number of professing Christian guests at the event had been divorced and remarried, producing all sorts of tensions due the lack of pastors in the area to teach the truth in God's Word that marriage is to be a permanent institution. The failure of Church and pastoral ministries had led to dysfunction in the lives of many!

Need: *So, we ask, "What does God want us to do to overcome dysfunctional behavior in ourselves or in others?!"*

**I. When David went out to fight against the Philistine giant Goliath, the rest of the men in Israel's army were completely dysfunctional as warriors: every day for the last 40 consecutive days, they had each fled from Goliath when he challenged any one of them to fight him, 1 Samuel 17:8-11, 16, 23-24.**

**II. However, with David's rise to power, the dysfunction of Israel's army was dramatically reversed:**

- A. A core of mighty fighting men arose around David, warriors who performed great exploits in combat against great foes at great personal exertion in sharp contrast to the men in Israel's army under king Saul.
- B. The exploits of these great men are described in 2 Samuel 23:8-39 (as follows):
  - 1. Adino exhibited **bravery** in slaying 800 enemy soldiers in a single battle, 2 Samuel 23:8.
  - 2. Eleazar exhibited **faithfulness** in standing his ground before an attack by foes so that even when all of Israel's other soldiers had fled, he stayed to fight so hard and long that his fingers cramped, causing his hand to cling to his sword, and his comrades returned only to take spoil from the slain, 2 Samuel 23:9-10.
  - 3. Shammah exhibited **protectiveness**: he stood his ground when his comrades fled before the Philistines to protect a field of mere lentils that were used to make soup, and he won the battle, 2 Samuel 23:11-12.
  - 4. These three men exhibited great **loyalty** to David: they fought through a whole Philistine garrison to get him water from Bethlehem's well, moving David to pour the water out to the Lord, 2 Samuel 23:13-17.
  - 5. Abishai **courageously** slew 300 men in a battle and helped David slay a Philistine giant to save David's life when David was older and vulnerable to losing his life in combat, 2 Samuel 23:18-19 with 21:15-17a.
  - 6. Benaiah exhibited **mental fortitude**, slaying two of Moab's greatest men, a lion in a pit on a snowy day and snatching a spear from a huge Egyptian foe and killing him with his own spear, 2 Sam. 23:20-23 NIV.

7. Uriah, one of David's mighty men, exhibited **dedication** to the Lord and to David by twice refusing to go home to be with his wife when Israel's army was still at war, 1 Samuel 11:8-13 with 2 Samuel 23:39.

**III. 2 Samuel 23:1-7 explains the CAUSE for this positive REVERSAL of DYSFUNCTION in Israel's army:**

- A. David's last public address is recorded in 2 Samuel 23:1-7 (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Sam. 23:1-7), and in it, he testified that God described to him what occurs when one who rules over men is righteous, ruling in the "fear" of or in a reverence for God, 2 Samuel 23:3 ESV, NIV. From Moses' words in Exodus 20:20, we learn that reverence for the Lord is the motivating force for obeying Him, what God then blesses.
- B. That divine blessing that results from such reverence-caused obedience is described in 2 Samuel 23:3-5:
1. A ruler over men who reveres God **will** rule righteously, meaning that his reverence for God insures that he obeys Him regardless if others around him try to pressure him to do otherwise, 2 Samuel 23:3.
  2. God then makes him like the sun that shines on fresh shoots of grass (*deshe'*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 206) on a cloudless morning after rain, causing the grass to grow all over the ground, 2 Sam. 23:4. Thus, a ruler who reveres God so as to heed Him objectively is impartial and predictable, what God uses to produce nurturing stability and peace even at the lowest (ground) level of society.
  3. Field grass was also the basis of Ancient Israel's agricultural economy: Proverbs 27:23-27 reveals how the livestock needed it for their food and to produce milk, meat and clothing for Israel's people that led to sustained economic wealth even for the king. Thus, 2 Samuel 23:4 teaches that a ruler who revered the Lord and thus objectively obeyed God was used of God to have a nurturing impact on all his subjects starting at the lowest level (grass) of society, what would counter dysfunctional behavior nationwide!
  4. Coupled with this blessing was God's blessing on the ruler's own dynasty in 2 Samuel 23:5: David there testified of God's establishment and preservation of his dynasty in the 2 Samuel 7:4-17 Davidic Covenant.
- C. The opposite of reverence for God in a ruler is a life of disobedience, a consequent lack of God's blessing and the promotion of dysfunctional behavior in one's subjects as described in 2 Samuel 23:6-7. Evil rulers such as Saul, like thorns, are unwanted, rejected and get destroyed because they only promote dysfunctional activity.

***Lesson:*** *The reversal of the dysfunction in Israel's army under Saul to its wholesome greatness under David came by (1) David's reverence for God (2) that led to his objective obedience of the Lord regardless of political pressures to the contrary. (3) God used such obedience to nurture Israel's people via David's impartial, predictable actions that led to stabilizing peace nationwide, overcoming dysfunctional behavior, (4) and God blessed David's dynasty.*

***Application:*** *To overcome widespread dysfunction, (1) may we believe in Christ for salvation to be saved and indwelt by the behavior-modifying Holy Spirit of God, John 3:16; Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:16. (2) Then, may we realize how utterly vulnerable our welfare is to God so as to revere Him (3) and thus objectively obey Him apart from all human political pressures to the contrary. (4) God will use this obedience to produce a nurturing, stabilizing influence on others that counters their dysfunctional behavior, (5) and He will richly bless our lives.*

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

Our Church leaders for many years have faced political pressures to yield on their Biblical belief that marriage should be a permanent institution not to be broken by divorce. Jesus opposed divorce and remarriage after divorce in Mark 10:1-12, so our leaders have held to that stance at times at significant cost in relationships.

However, the Lord has recently wonderfully rewarded this stand! One of our deacons' sons who grew up in our Church all the years that our leaders were taking this stand not long ago brought his fiancée to speak with me about an argument made to her by a family member in support of divorce and remarriage. The deacon's son and I were privileged to show her from Scripture the truth on the issue, and she accepted it and made it her belief.

As a result, regardless if a number of their wedding guests who were professing believers but who had been divorced and remarried from the lack of good teaching on the truth, this couple was married last month, committed to living in their union until death parts them! The stand our Church leaders took all of these years that influenced this deacon's son when he was growing up has produced fruit not only in his life, but also in the life of his new bride!

Reverence for God that produces objective obedience over political pressures to the contrary works to nurture and overcome dysfunctional behavior, especially where it means so much to us -- in the lives of our own youth!

**May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, may we sense our deep accountability to God so as to revere Him and thus heed His Word regardless of any political pressures to the contrary. God can then use us to counter even extensive dysfunctional behavior in people around us with His blessing.**