

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

U. Handling Our Loss Of Trust In Formerly Reliable Parties

(1 Samuel 20:1-42)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many people today sense that entities in which they once trusted are becoming less and less reliable:

(1) It happens in the secular realm: (a) an editorial in the October 3, 2016 Waterbury Republican-American ("Furthermore," p. 6A) told how "The Department of Homeland Security . . . 'is granting as many citizenship applications as it can to try to sway participation in this year's presidential election'" according to a report in The Washington Times, September 22, and it cited "an internal department document" of the DHS in support of this claim. (b) The editorial also told of "The New York Times' 2011 assertion that 'There is almost no voting fraud in America'" opposite Ethan Epstein's September 29, 2016 report in The Weekly Standard that "'(R)esearch published in Electoral Studies has found that non-citizens vote in significant enough numbers to actually sway [sic] elections,'" Ibid.

Accordingly, many citizens question the credibility of not only government institutions, but also that of the mainstream media as it is supposed to serve the public good by reporting the truth.

(2) It happens in evangelical realms, too: in his September 23, 2016 letter to supporters, Ken Ham of Answers In Genesis told how "Andy Stanley, the senior pastor of North Point Community Church in Georgia" and son of renowned Bible teaching Pastor Charles Stanley, said at a Southern Baptist conference, "I would ask preachers, pastors and student pastors in their communication to get the spotlight off the Bible and back on the resurrection . . . (a)nd that we would leverage the authority we have in the resurrection as opposed to Scripture . . ."

Andy Stanley's call counters 2 Timothy 4:1-2 and Acts 20:27 that pastors **focus** on preaching **all** of the **Scriptures** in view of their accountability to Christ, not just the resurrection parts of God's Word. Many pastors like me are thus left to conclude that we have fewer and fewer parties around who even support our heeding God's calling!

Need: *So we ask, "If I sense a growing unreliability in supports I once used for my welfare, what must I do?!"*

- I. David and Jonathan came to realize that Israel's king Saul could no longer be trusted not to kill David:**
- A. After Saul pursued David to Naioth where God supernaturally protected him, David fled from Naioth to his friend Jonathan, Saul's son, to ask what he had done that made Saul want to kill him, 1 Samuel 20:1.
 - B. Jonathan at first refused to believe his father wanted to kill David, for he thought his father always confided in him about such things, and Saul had not told Jonathan to kill David, 1 Samuel 20:2.
 - C. David replied that Saul knew of Jonathan's love for David, that he thus had likely hidden from Jonathan his intention to kill David lest Jonathan protect David from Saul's efforts, 1 Samuel 20:3.
 - D. To settle David's concerns, Jonathan offered to perform a test on his father to discover Saul's real intentions regarding David in accord with how David and Jonathan mutually planned that he do so (1 Samuel 20:4-23):
 - 1. David would stay absent from his usual seat at Saul's table for the start of the monthly new moon feast. Saul would not think this to be unusual, for he would presume that David was ceremonially unclean and thus unable to attend the feast, so David would plan to be absent on the second day of the feast also.
 - 2. If Saul asked why David was absent that second day, Jonathan would explain that David had to attend an annual sacrifice with his clan back in Bethlehem instead of attending Saul's feast.
 - 3. Were Saul to want David present so he could kill him with his javelin, Saul would not tolerate this explanation about David's absence, but if he did tolerate it, it would reveal that Saul meant David no harm.
 - 4. Meanwhile, David was to hide in a certain field on the third day and Jonathan would signal him with action involving a bow shot on whether it was safe for David to return to the palace or if he had to flee.
 - E. When Jonathan performed the test, Saul exposed his bitter hatred toward David, 1 Samuel 20:24-34:
 - 1. Jonathan's explanation of David's absence on the second feast day infuriated Saul, and he spoke with coarse language to his son Jonathan for his effort to protect David, 1 Sam. 20:24-30. Saul added that as long as David lived, all hope for Jonathan to become king was threatened, so Jonathan's effort to shield David was held by Saul to be a despicable, shameful thing, 1 Sam. 20:31. Saul clearly was not righteous!
 - 2. When Jonathan asked why his father wanted to kill David, instead of giving a Biblical reply, Saul in fury heaved his javelin at Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:32-33a), proving that Saul intended to kill David and revealing that David would not be safe in Saul's palace, 1 Samuel 20:33b.

3. In response to Saul's outburst, Jonathan rose from the table and refused to eat as an expression of great disapproval of his father's ungodly hatred toward David, 1 Samuel 20:34.
- II. Accordingly, Jonathan communicated to David by his bow shot activity of David's need to flee from Saul and live separate from family, friends and many of his fellow countrymen, 1 Samuel 20:35-40.**
- III. Realizing the high cost in the pain of his personal relationships due to his need to flee gave David great grief, but he still had to flee from Saul much like an outlaw and live by faith in God, 1 Samuel 20:41-42:**
- A. When David saw Jonathan signal that David had to flee from Saul, Jonathan was giving up his right to the throne in protecting David and protecting his close friend at the cost of directing him to leave his presence.
 - B. Overwhelmed by Jonathan's high personal cost and by his own high cost of being alienated from family and friends, David came out of hiding and bowed to the ground three times before Jonathan, 1 Samuel 20:41a.
 - C. Then David and Jonathan culturally kissed one another and broke down and wept, with David sobbing, v. 41b.
 - D. As they parted, Jonathan reminded David of their mutual promises to protect each other's offspring, verse 42.
- IV. In God's long-term plan, David's emotionally painful flight from Saul and life of faith was necessary:**
- A. God needed to have a complete shift in dynasty from Saul to David, what was necessary to support peace in Israel's people who had chosen to live under a monarchy where it was culturally intolerable to have competing royal lines. Thus, Jonathan's future death alongside the death his father Saul, Saul's other sons and all Saul's men in a single battle (1 Samuel 31:1-6) and David's leaving Jonathan as well as Saul fit this divine plan.
 - B. Separating David from Saul would enhance Saul's fall and David's rise in a life of faith in line with God's will:
 1. Saul's troubling bouts with an evil spirit from God had been alleviated by David's ministry of music under the Holy Spirit's power (1 Sam. 16:23), so having David leave Saul would enhance Saul's decline as king.
 2. David's flight and exile would drive him to trust the Lord in humility as seen in his psalms in this era (cf. Psalm 54, 55, 57, etc.), all necessary to forge David into becoming a great king. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)
 - C. Separating David from Saul geographically would also make Israel's people more easily see their need to shift from following a badly declining Saul to a greatly rising David as the two became more sharply contrasted!

Lesson: *By way of a test, David and Jonathan learned that Saul could no longer be trusted not to kill David, that David and Jonathan painfully had to part and David flee and live by faith in God in exile in line with God's plan.*

Application: *If we realize that we can no longer rely on supports we once used, may we shift our allegiance from the supports to God regardless of the pain involved, trusting that the Lord has our best interests in mind.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) In our sermon introduction, we told how a noted Bible teaching pastor has recommended that pastors "in their communication . . . get the spotlight off the Bible and back on the resurrection . . . (a)nd that we . . . leverage the authority we have in the resurrection as opposed to Scripture," Ibid., Ham. We also recalled that 2 Timothy 4:1-2 with Acts 20:27 does not permit pastors to do that, for Paul there directed that they preach all of God's Word in view of everyone's accountability to God and Christ at His coming and kingdom.

What many Christian leaders today like Andy Stanley miss in their efforts to make the ministry of the Church more effective is Paul's point in 2 Timothy 3:17, that **Scripture itself thoroughly equips the man of God for every good work as God views a pastor's assignment.** The duty of every pastor is **NOT** to resort to man-made plans of action to achieve success as man views success, but to **follow God's timeless plan** for pastoral ministry that is **already given in Scripture**, that one **preach all the Word** and **heed it in life and ministry** for God's reward!

(2) The same application of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 fits the other issues in our sermon introduction -- the challenge of citizens realizing that their government and mainstream media lack credibility: all that God's people need for every good work is found in Scripture, so God calls us to look to Scripture for all the insight we need for living! This will include a life of faith in God that takes up the slack of an unreliable government and an untrustworthy media.

Incidentally, this is just what our Pilgrim forefathers did in 1620! They left the Old World simply because the governments and societies in Europe functioned so oppressively contrary to the forefathers' efforts to obey Scripture that they left for the New World to gain the liberty there to obey the Word of God!

Was it easy for them? Not at all! Many of them wept as they left loved ones behind never to see them in this life again. But just look at what they accomplished by way of the heritage they left us as a people!

Accordingly, may we trust in Christ for salvation to receive eternal life, John 3:16. Then, regardless of the grief or pain involved, may we rely on God and heed Scripture instead of continuing to rely on entities we once trusted but which now prove to be failing us. In doing so, we will align ourselves with God's perfect plan!