

## 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**

#### **W. Productively Handling An Unsettling Lack Of Trust**

#### **(1 Samuel 23:1-29)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In today's world, we often face or experience an unsettling lack of trust in institutions and/or people:

(1) A Gallup report last month by Jeffrey M. Jones ("Americans' Trust in Political Leaders, Public at New Lows," September 21, 2016; [gallup.com](http://gallup.com)) claims that "(a)t no point in the last four decades have Americans expressed less trust than they do today in U. S. political leaders or in the . . . people who voted" them "into office."

(2) We also hear of widespread public distrust of the mainstream media, but the media is distrusted even by a "veteran national and foreign correspondent covering politics since the 1960s," Andrew Malcolm: in his op-ed, "Too many campaign coincidences" (Republican-American, October 19, 2016, p. 8A), wrote, "A few things you're unlikely to read elsewhere: Donald Trump's presidential candidacy -- and America's ability to choose their next leader -- are being destroyed by a sequence of events way too well orchestrated to be coincidental."

(3) Such distrust of the mainstream media is also unsettling to many responsible voters: Mitchell S. Garden, an M. D. from Bantam, in a letter to the Republican-American (Ibid., October 20, 2016, p. 7A) wrote, "As I have watched, read and listened to the political talking heads on both sides of the aisle, I find it very concerning that those outlets we depend upon to provide bias-free news have put their thumbs heavily on the scales to determine the outcome of the upcoming election . . . Democrats, independents and Republicans should be equally scared for the future of the country when the news media determine outcomes."

(3) Locally, people we all know face unsettling trials that are caused by a lack of trust in relationships in the workplace, at school or in family, extended family or marital relationships.

Need: *So we ask, "In today's challenging world, how should I productively handle an unsettling lack of trust?!"*

#### **I. King Saul's efforts to find and kill David while David was directed by God to stay in Judah led to a great challenge of trust for David involving the people of Judah, 1 Samuel 22:5 with 1 Samuel 23:1-3, 5, 7-8:**

- A. God's prophet Gad had directed David to stay in the land of Judah in Israel, 1 Samuel 22:5.
- B. However, though David might defend a town in Judah from the Philistines, there was always a threat that the townsfolk might side with Saul if he heard that David was there and he came to get him, 1 Sam. 23:1, 5, 7-8.
- C. David thus faced uncertainty over the trustworthiness of his relationship with Judah's people, 1 Sam. 23:1-3.

#### **II. However, David had learned from his errant, impulsive actions in fleeing from Saul to get God's directions for his life, so he productively sought God's guidance and help, 1 Samuel 23:1-13, 14-29:**

- A. First, David productively sought God's Biblical guidance through use of the priest's ephod, 1 Samuel 23:1-12:
  - 1. When the priest Abiathar survived Saul's slaughter of the priests and fled to David, he brought the ephod, the high priest's armless outer garment that had the breastplate attached to it with its pouch that held the sacred lots of Urim and Thummim used in finding God's will, 1 Sam. 23:6 NIV; Ex. 28:6-30; Num. 27:21.
  - 2. So, to handle his trials re: trust, David sought God's guidance by use of the ephod, 1 Samuel 23:1-4, 7-12:
    - a. When the Philistines attacked the town of Keilah in Judah, David used the ephod to ask God if he should deliver Keilah, and God directed him to do so, 1 Samuel 23:1-2.
    - b. However, David's men already feared the threat of Saul, and were anxious about battling the Philistines lest doing so reveal their whereabouts to Saul and bring him down to Keilah to attack them only to see Keilah's people then side with Saul as his loyal subjects to oppose them, 1 Samuel 23:3.
    - c. Accordingly, David again asked God's guidance by use of the ephod, and God assured him that he should go and deliver Keilah from the Philistines, so David heeded God's lead over the fears of his men, and David gained a great victory by delivering Keilah from the Philistines, 1 Samuel 23:4-5.
    - d. Saul thus heard that David was in Keilah, so Saul's men approached the city to besiege it, 1 Sam. 23:7-8.
    - e. Hearing of Saul's move against him, David again sought God's guidance via the ephod and learned that Saul would attack Keilah and that Keilah's people, though delivered by David from the Philistines, would still side with Saul as loyal subjects and turn David over to him, 1 Samuel 23:9-12.
    - f. Thus, David and his men fled from Keilah, temporarily ending Saul's search for him, 1 Sam. 23:13.
- B. Second, David productively accepted the encouragement of proven godly friend Jonathan, 1 Sam. 23:14-18:

1. David fled from Keilah east to the ravines and caves of the desolate land of southern Judah, and Saul looked for him there while God kept rescuing him, 1 Sam 23:14; R. S. B., KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Sam. 23:14.
2. In this difficult time, Saul's son Jonathan, David's proven, godly friend, visited David and encouraged him, assuring him that Saul would not find him, that David would be the next king with Jonathan hoping that he would be next to David in his kingdom, and that Saul knew this would occur, 1 Samuel 23:15-17.
3. To David's encouragement, Jonathan and David again made a covenant of loyal friendship, 1 Sam. 23:18.
- C. Third, David used common sense and waited on God to rescue him in an overpowering trial, 1 Sam. 23:19-29:
  1. While David was in Judah's desolate hill country, the people of Ziph there who knew the area went to Saul to report that David was hiding in their midst, offering to help turn David over to Saul, 1 Samuel 23:19-20.
  2. Saul blessed the Ziphites, urging them with their knowledge of the area to spy on David, 1 Sam. 23:21-23.
  3. When Saul thus began to pursue David there, Saul with Ziphite intelligence began to close in on him so that at one point, Saul went on one side of a mountain and David on the other side, 1 Samuel 23:24-26.
  4. Saul then got word of a Philistine raid, so he left chasing David to fight the Philistines, 1 Samuel 23:27-28.
  5. Realizing he needed to leave the land of the Ziphites, David used common sense and moved east to Engedi (1 Sam. 23:29), a spring with associated streams located below the limestone cliffs of the west side of the Dead Sea where the water was drinkable but 80 degrees F. warm, Z. P. E. B., v. Two, p. 307.

***Lesson:*** *David handled the crisis of trust he faced with Judah's people amid his problems with Saul and conflict with the Philistines by (1) seeking God's guidance, (2) drawing encouragement from his reliable, godly friend Jonathan, (3) using common sense and (4) relying on God to rescue him if facing overwhelming difficulties.*

***Application:*** *If facing an unsettling trial of trust, (1) may we believe in Christ to become a child of God and be put under God's "much more" care, John 3:16; Romans 8:32. (2) May we then seek God's guidance, what today does NOT involve using the Old Testament Urim and Thummin, but (a) heeding Scripture as our first priority (2 Tim. 3:15-17), (b) heeding multiple, reputable advisers as our second priority (2 Tim. 3:14; Prov. 11:14), (c) heeding Biblically-defensible circumstances as our third priority (Acts 16:6-10) and (d) doing what we ourselves will to do as our fourth priority (since God works in us to make us want to do His will, Phil. 2:12-13). (3) May we also be encouraged by proven, godly, trustworthy associates who support us in our trials and (4) use common sense to avoid defeat (5) while waiting for God to deliver us when the trials we face are humanly too great for us.*

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

In our introduction, we reported how trust in American political leaders, in the people who voted for them and in the mainstream media is very low, what causes people to feel unsettled about their personal and national futures.

However, 1 Samuel 23 calls us to use God's guidance to handle this distrust issue so that we be settled, and we do so as follows: [Due to a lack of space here, we dispense with a lot of exposition to share the results of our studies.]

(1) Based on our sermon notes above, we know that God's revelation via Bible prophesy about our times can be used like David used the ephod to discern from God how to function in trials of distrust faced in one's own era.

(2) Thus, we noted last week that Daniel 2 has a 2,620-year-old prophesy that Europe and America in our era will have strong-mixed-with-weak governments, that the races would not mix, with this (iron and clay mix) remaining through the rapture of the Church (feet) to the Great Tribulation era (ten toes of the Revived Roman Empire).

(3) Also, in our Revelation chs. 2-3 studies on the prophesied 7 eras of Church History, we know re: today's era, the 1950-to-the-rapture Laodicean Church era (Rev. 3:14-22; 4:1-2), via Rev. 3:21's "in" Christ's earthly, Davidic-like throne in view of Rev. 7:14-17 with Matt. 24:15-21, our era will become a sample of sorts of the Great Tribulation, becoming marked by antichrist-like rulers in the world government-business-ecumenico-religio complex who gain power by intrigue and turn ever more despotic to hold onto power (cf. Dan. 7:7-25; Ibid., Ryrice, ftn. to Dan. 7:7-8) as constituents recoil ever more from such increasing despotism. Disillusioned, hurt people will look outside the world's complex for balm and find it in grace-based, Spirit-filled local churches with Bible exposition (Rev. 3:18-21). Christ will give such churches and their pastors great, positive influence worldwide until the Rev. 4:1-2 rapture.

(4) We thus trust God (a) to keep the world government-business-ecumenico-religio complex's structure steady enough as the iron-clay-mix through to the rapture (Dan. 2) to provide a structure for society so God can fulfill His predictions for our Church era. (b) We also realize that God will permit an ever escalating oppression of people by the world complex's leaders to fulfill His will to use that oppression to drive disillusioned, hurting people to the nurture of expounded Scripture in local churches (Rev. 3:14-22), that we live settled lives in it all, 2 Thess. 2:13-17.

**In facing crises of distrust, may we believe in Christ as Savior and follow David's example for blessing.**