

## 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**

##### **DD. Adjusting When The Path We Chose Threatens To Be Destructive**

**(1 Samuel 30:1-31 et al.)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many people today face the concern that the path they are choosing in some realm of life may be destructive:

(1) It's happening at the national level: former Senator Jim DeMint, R- S C, in a recent op-ed ("On Day 1, repeal Obamacare law," Republican-American, January 7, 2017, p. 6A), claimed: "Obamacare was a mandate when Congress needed to shove it through, and it was a tax when the U. S. Supreme Court decided to look the other way."

However, since then, "Many thousands of Americans have lost their insurance plans or their doctors, or seen their premiums raised to unbelievable levels. Seventeen of the original 23 Obamacare insurance co-ops have collapsed. The massive centralization of health insurance has hurt patients and providers alike." (Ibid.)

Thus, following the election of President-elect Trump, Congress is poised to repeal The Affordable Care Act.

(2) It's happening locally for us as believers: (a) I have recently had or seen several discussions involving Church members on whether "Christian counseling" or the Bible alone is to be used for counseling. The stakes are high not only for the needy who seek counsel, but for those who seek to help them or support those who help them!

(b) I have also had discussions with believers on what main focus a local church should have, be it program, missions, evangelism, discipleship, etc.! We all need to know this before we have our Church Annual Meeting!

Need: *So, we ask, "If I wonder whether the path I've chosen in some realm seems destructive, what should I do?"*

**I. David had decided to relocate from Judah to Philistia to escape the threat of Saul, 1 Samuel 27:1-4.**

**II. However, through the prophet Gad, the Lord had already told him to stay in Judah, 1 Samuel 22:5.**

**III. The Mosaic Law warned David of many troubles were he to disobey God's Word, Deut. 28:15-25.**

**IV. Thus, his decision to relocate from Judah to Philistia proved to be traumatically destructive for David:**

- A. When he moved to Philistia, David was assigned by his Philistine overlord Achish to live in Ziklag, a city near desert raiding Gentiles, 1 Sam. 27:2-6; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, map 4: "The Twelve Tribes of Israel."
- B. To enhance his Philistine overlord's trust in him, David deceptively raided and annihilated Gentile towns in the area around Ziklag while telling Achish that he was making raids on towns in Israel, 1 Samuel 27:7-12.
- C. Achish thus became so persuaded of David's loyalty to him and distancing of his past ties with Israel that he directed David to help the Philistines fight Israel (1 Sam. 28:1-2). This led David to lead all his men to join Achish to do battle in a continued effort to enhance Achish's trust in David's loyalty to him, 1 Samuel 29:1-2.
- D. However, with none of his men left to guard their city of Ziklag, a marauding band of Amalekites attacked and burned the city down, taking captive the families of David and his men, 1 Samuel 30:1-3.
- E. This traumatic event left David and his men deeply grieving, and his men bitterly spoke of executing David for his bad decision to leave no rear guard in Ziklag, what deeply distressed David, 1 Samuel 30:4-6a.

**V. At this low point in life, David for the first time in a long time humbly turned to God, 1 Samuel 30:6b-7:**

- A. Back in 1 Samuel 27:1 where David had decided to leave Judah to relocate in Philistia, Scripture explains that "David said in his heart" his reasons for this move. Accordingly, his decision to launch out in a different direction in life was thus **NOT** authored by the **Lord**, but by David's reliance on his own wisdom.
- B. Since then, there is no reference in the text to David's ever humbly seeking God's will, but of his trying to manipulate people around him by use of sinful deception so he could afford to live at peace with the pagan Philistines that God had directed Israel to drive out of the Promised Land and thereby stay safely away from Saul's threatening pursuits of his life. (1 Samuel 27:2-28:2; 29:1-11)
- C. However, with the fall and destruction of Ziklag and the loss of the families and goods of David and his men, he "strengthened himself in the Lord His God," 1 Samuel 30:6b ESV. One commentary explains, "It was during times like these that David wrote some of his most helpful psalms," (J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible With J. Vernon McGee, 1982, vol. II, p. 183), because for the first time since 1 Samuel 23:9-13, instead of relying on his own heart's inclinations and thoughts like he did in 1 Samuel 27:1, David sought God's guidance through the high priest's Scripturally sanctioned use of the Urim and Thummin that were in the high priest's ephod, 1 Samuel 30:7; Exodus 28:6-30; Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Exodus 28:30.

**VI. Consequently, God realigned David's whole life, producing great blessing for him, 1 Samuel 30:8-31:**

- A. Through the priest Abiathar's use of the Urim and Thummin, David learned that God wanted him to pursue the Amalekites, that in attacking them, he would recover everything that had been taken in their raid, 1 Sam. 30:8.
- B. David's men thus pursued the Amalekites, and along the way found an Egyptian slave who had been abandoned by his Amalekite master without being left either food or water for three days, 1 Samuel 30:9-12.
- C. The Egyptian slave led David's band to the Amalekites who were celebrating the great spoil they had taken, so David's men fought them for a whole day, killing all the Amalekites except 400 young men who escaped on camels, and David and his men recovered all of their families and their goods unharmed, 1 Samuel 30:13-19.
- D. David also arranged for the group of his men who had been too tired to pursue the Amalekites, but who had stayed with the baggage, to share in the war spoils, 1 Samuel 30:20-25. David had learned from the tragedy of Ziklag to keep a rear guard with his goods and people, and to honor that guard for its protective role!
- E. Last, David shared of the great spoil the Amalekites had taken from both Judah and the Philistines (1 Samuel 30:26), spreading the bounty around Judah as gifts from God and healing past strained relationships with those who had once sided with Saul against him, 1 Sam. 23:10-12, 19-21; 26:1 with 1 Samuel 30:26-31. This wise move opened the door for David later to be accepted as king first over the tribe of Judah in 2 Samuel 2:1-4a.

***Lesson:*** *When David chose a direction in his life without God's leading that proved to be emotionally devastating and destructive, he returned to rely on and to follow the Lord, and God set David back on track with blessing.*

***Application:*** *If we wonder if a direction we chose in life is destructive, (1) may we heed God by trusting in Christ to be saved, John 3:16; Acts 17:30. (2) Then, may we (a) check Scripture's evaluation of our path, and (b) if we err in it, confess it to God (1 John 1:9; Isaiah 8:20) and (b) correct our path by heeding godly believers and the truths God let them teach and convince us were true, putting a priority on Scripture (2 Timothy 3:14-17), (c) for blessing.*

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

We thus apply the sermon lesson to address the issues introduced in our introduction (as follows):

(1) We noted in our introduction the realization many have about the problems of The Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare. Since the law was passed by Congress, and a new Congress is poised to repeal it, Scripture 1 Timothy 2:1-8 calls us to pray for the leaders of Congress and the new President and Supreme Court to handle the issue of the nation's health needs so as to promote a lifestyle where the Church can minister peaceably.

(2) We also noted in our introduction that we had witnessed or had had discussions with Church members on whether one should use "Christian counseling" or the Bible alone for counseling needs.

Scripture teaches the direction we should have here (as follows): (a) in Isaiah 8:20 ESV, God's prophet directed that if Israel's people did not say, "To the teaching and to the testimony," referring to Scripture revelation as "the only absolute and trustworthy standard" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, ftn. to Isaiah 8:20), "it is because they have no dawn," even the morning twilight that promises more insight. (b) Then, Isaiah 9:2 ESV in the same context predicted the arrival of Jesus as God's "Great Light," which in Isaiah 9:6 ESV would be called "Wonderful Counselor" in contrast to the false counsel of mediums in witchcraft who were sought by Israel back in Isaiah 9:19! (c) Since Jesus is the Word of God personified in Revelation 19:11-16, and since Scripture is sufficient to equip believers for every good work until Christ's return according to 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2, God wants us to rely on Scripture as our sole source of counseling insight versus utilizing any other sources of fallen man like "Christian counseling" utilizes.

(3) We also referred in our sermon introduction to the question a local church must have as its main focus, be it program development, missions, evangelism, discipleship or something else. Of note, 1 Timothy 3:15 NIV claims the local church is "the pillar and foundation of the truth." The absence of the definite article for "pillar" and "foundation" in the Greek New Testament text "stresses their qualitative force: the church is nothing less than the truth's *pillar*; better still, it is the truth's very *foundation*." (Wm. Hendriksen, New Testament Commentary: Expos. of The Pastoral Epistles, 1974, p. 136, ftn. 70) Paul was not claiming that the local church innately comprised or authored God's truth, but that God used it as the institution He established for giving His witness through His Word to the world. As J. Dwight Pentecost once put it, "(W)e are called to teach the Word. It is the Word that is the power of God to salvation, it is the Word that is the power for Christian living, and I would want [Dallas Seminary graduates] to make the Word the center of their ministry . . . it will fulfill that to which they are called upon to do in ministry." ("Preach the Word": An interview with Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, Dallas Connection, 2000, v. 7, no. 3.)

Thus, the main focus of the local church's ministry must be holding forth God's truth in the Scriptures.

**May we heed God's leading through His Word in the paths of life we take that we might enjoy His blessing and avoid the painful and destructive pitfalls of going our own way independent of God's Word.**