

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Kings: The Kings Of Israel And Judah From Solomon To The Babylonian Captivity

II. The Divided Kingdom, 1 Kings 12:1-22:53

I. Handling Threatening Conflicts God's Way

(1 Kings 16:8-28)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Right now, we face humanly threatening conflicts on a variety of levels, what we can readily illustrate:

(1) We face it in the national government: The Wall Street Journal recently reported, "In Washington a picture is emerging of an eerie and lack-of-candor railroading of Donald Trump . . . by government officials who refuse to acknowledge the authority of the duly-elected chief executive . . . And such abuse has inspired one of the President's harshest critics," a "Harvard law professor" named "Jack Goldsmith," to "raise an alarm." (James Freeman, "An Anti-Trumper v. 'Deep State,'" April 24, 2018; wsj.com)

(2) The mainstream media is involved, too: E. J. Dionne, Jr., "a syndicated writer in Washington," in an op-ed, "Trump Circus Derails Meaningful Debate" (The Hartford Courant, April 30, 2018, p. A7) wrote, "News outlets are entirely justified in lavishing coverage on the sensational and the personal" parts of President Trump's life (like the "Stormy Daniels" and "Michael Cohen" stories) "since developments in these areas are a part of a bigger story that could undermine the Trump presidency all together." Mr. Dionne thus asserted that the mainstream media's setting aside the practice of regular journalism to lavish coverage on President Trump's sensational and personal life in order to end his presidency is justified journalism, what with any previous president would be termed a "railroad" job!

(3) We face threatening conflicts in academia: "Tom Short," an evangelist to college and university students who "sets up large, apologetics-oriented banners on campus in high-traffic area" so he can speak "with students who stop to look at them" was told by one college professor, "You can say whatever you want in your church, but this is my turf. You don't belong here." ("The Gospel Goes to College," Answers, May-June 2018, p. 78-79)

(4) We face it locally: three people from different families in our body have recently told my wife or me of threatening conflicts they face at work or in their extended families, and several have asked for private prayer about it.

Need: *So, we ask, "How does God want us to respond to threatening conflicts we face?!"*

- I. With the passing of Israel's king Baasha, three kings arose after him in quick succession who handled humanly threatening conflicts they faced by addressing them in their own efforts, 1 Kings 16:8-28:**
- A. Baasha's son Elah ruled Israel two years, but he was careless about his security. He got drunk outside his fortress when his army was away beseiging Gibbethon, leaving him such an easy prey for replacement as king, the captain of half his chariots, Zimri assassinated him and made himself king, 1 Kings 16:8-9, 15b.
 - B. Zimri then tried to secure his reign by killing off all of Baasha's family and friends, 1 Kings 16:10-11, 15a.
 - C. When Israel's army that was beseiging Gibbethon heard of Zimri's seizure of the throne, they made Omri, their commander of superior military rank to Zimri king in the field in opposition to Zimri, and stopped beseiging Gibbethon to return to Tirzah where Zimri ruled to beseige it in order to kill Zimri, 1 Kings 16:15b-17.
 - D. Seeing the city around him fall to Omri, Zimri entered the fortress of the former king Elah's palace and burned it down over him, trying to undermine Omri's future security as king in leaving him no fortress, 1 Kings 16:18.
 - E. Sure enough, lack of a fortress in easy-to-beseige Tirzah left Omri facing a willing challenger in Tibni, so a six-year war ensued between Omri and Tibni until Tibni was slain and Omri became king, 1 K. 16:21-23a, 8a.
 - F. Omri's six-year-long civil war with Tibni for the throne, the fate of the last king Zimri, the destruction of the king's fortress at Tirzah and his realization by his own experience of how easy Tirzah was to beseige left Omri concerned for his personal safety as Israel's new king at Tirzah. He thus moved the capitol to an "almost impregnable . . . stronghold against alien attacks," the hill Shemer he renamed Samaria, 1 Kings 16:23-24; Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 521. Samaria "was an oval hilltop about 300 feet high and isolated from the hills around it except to the East where a saddle joined it to the main North-South ridge. Although lower than some surrounding hills, it was beyond artillery (catapult) range from them," Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., v. Five, p. 232.
- II. Yet, GOD'S COMMENTARY on each of these king's reigns SIGNIFICANTLY gave NO MENTION of their FEAR of CONFLICTS, but CRITIQUED EACH KING'S FAILURE TO OBEY SCRIPTURE:**
- A. God in 1 Kings 16:12 asserted that Zimri's slaying of Elah and Baasha's family and friends fulfilled Jehu's prophecy that Baasha's dynasty would be eliminated for heeding Jeroboam's idolatrous syncretism and murdering Jeroboam's family in violation of Scripture (at Ex.. 20:1-4 on idolatry and Ex. 20:13 on murder).

- B. God in 1 Kings 16:13 ESV asserted that He had let Elah be slain by Zimri for failing to reject Jeroboam's religious syncretism like Elah's father Baasha had failed to do though Elah had ruled for just two years!
- C. God in 1 Kings 16:19-20 asserted that Zimri's fall due to his failure to counter Jeroboam's syncretism though he ruled just seven days (1 Kings 16:15a), as well as for murdering Baasha's people (cf. 1 Kings 16:7d)!
- D. God in 1 Kings 16:25-28 asserted the Omri did more evil than all the kings before him since he more ardently supported Jeroboam's religious syncretism and provoked God to anger with his idols!
- E. Hosea 8:2a, written long after these kings lived (Ibid.; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1245), had God critiquing the rise of these men to become kings without His approval in violation of Deuteronomy 17:15.

III. The REASON God did NOT MENTION the FEAR of CONFLICT these kings had was SCRIPTURE'S REVELATION that Israel's kings were to GAIN SECURITY from GOD by OBEYING HIS WORD, so GOD had MENTIONED ONLY their DISOBEDIENCE as the CAUSE of ALL their PROBLEMS:

- A. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 revealed that **were** Israel's kings to revere the Lord and obey His Word, **God** would "prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel," Deuteronomy 17:20c.
- B. David had heeded the Lord (1 Kings 15:5), and testified, "The Lord is my Rock . . . my Fortress . . . and my Stronghold" (Psalm 18:2 ESV), and "the Lord delivered him from . . . all his enemies," 2 Samuel 22:1 ESV.
- C. Yet, Baasha, Elah, Zimri and Omri failed to **trust** so as to **obey** God, resorting sin and missing God's security!

Lesson: *By handling threatening conflicts by their own efforts instead of trusting God and heeding His written Word to receive God's help, kings Baasha, Elah, Zimri and Omri failed to please God, so He did not help them.*

Application: *(1) May we heed Scripture to trust in Christ for eternal life, Acts 17:30; John 3:16. (2) If facing humanly threatening conflicts, may we do what Israel's kings were SUPPOSED to do [as modified by God's directives for us today] -- may we (a) NOT address the conflict in OUR OWN efforts, but (b) HEED GOD'S directives to (i) focus on using our spiritual gift in the office He assigns us under sanctioned overseers (Deut. 17:15a; 2 Tim. 1:6 and 1 Tim. 1:3-4), (ii) trust God for the resources we need to fulfill His calling (Deut. 17:16, 17b), (iii) avoid compromising with the ungodly (Deut. 17:17a) and (iv) daily expose our minds to Scripture that we heed God's will precisely to gain His blessing (Deut. 17:18-20). (c) GOD will then ably HELP us in our conflicts.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply this message to the issues of concern that were presented in our sermon introduction as follows:

(1) On the alleged "railroading" threat to President Trump's administration by high ranking officials and the press, we have often before noted how Revelation 3:21 in its wording and context (cf. Revelation 7:17) teaches that in our era of the prophesied Laodicean Church (Revelation 3:14-22), despotic rulers **will** rise by intrigue in the world's socio-economic-government-religious complex akin to how the future antichrist will gain power after the Church is raptured, and that this situation will cause many to become disillusioned and oppressed. Such people will seek relief and find it only by faith in Christ and in the exposition of Scripture. God will let this mini-Great Tribulation era occur in this last era of Church History as a final "wake-up" call to today's believers and the world to repent before the rapture, so we need to be ready to help the disillusioned and oppressed who come our way seeking answers and balm.

(2) On threats in the mainstream media and academia against the truth, Scripture calls us to use the Bible as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path in life (Psalm 119:105). The more opposition to truth and righteousness we face, the greater should be our use of Scripture.

For example, we recall from our introduction how Tom Short ministers on college campuses where one professor told him, "(T)his is my turf. You don't belong here," (Ibid., Answers, p. 79). Tom responded wisely by making Scripture the sole content of his talks. In one case, when an atheist told him he didn't believe in God because the stellar universe was too vast for a Creator to be concerned about insignificant man, Tom answered that "David" had "pondered" this same idea in "Psalm 8. In light of the heavens, we should feel insignificant, but down deep, we know we have value. Why? Because we are created in the image of an almighty God. We're more than just advanced animals" as evolutionary theory suggests, " (w)e're made in the very image of God." (Ibid., p. 79-80)

Tom reports, "It's hard" for people "to ignore us when we speak with such conviction . . . Our bold, confident public presentations challenge secularism and unbelief right on their own turf." (Ibid., p. 80)

(3) The same goes for facing threatening conflicts locally in our personal lives. God calls us to trust Him to handle the conflicts we face as we shift our attention from trying to address the conflicts in our own efforts to heed His Word on His assignments in life for us. He then gets involved to offset our conflicts so we can fulfill His will!

May we trust in Christ to be saved. May we then trust and obey God to see HIM address our conflicts.