

## 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

#### H. God's Gracious Moral Help To His People Over The Ages

#### (1 Samuel 7:2-14)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In view of current events, one may ask if God is as willing and able to help us in our era of immoral darkness that affects both the world and even some evangelicals as He was to help our forefathers. Consider the following:

(1) Jason Dearen & Terrance Harris' story, "Orlando mourns as possible motives emerge for club gunman" (msn.com, June 14, 2016) told of the recent "worst mass shooting in modern U. S. history" where "29-year-old Omar Mateen, an American born Muslim," killed 49 people in an Orlando, Florida gay nightclub, having been "clearly 'radicalized' at least in part via the internet."

The days following this tragedy saw the mainstream media pour forth story after story of heightened conflicts in the political realm over the typical hot-button issues of "gays, guns and God" as this event only reflected America's ongoing struggle over the nature and meaning of human marriage and morality.

(2) Yet, not only is the world in great moral need, even some evangelicals struggle in spiritual darkness regarding morality: R. Albert Mohler, Jr. ("Evangelical: What's in a Name?", contributor to John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 41) warned of "the ethical revisionism of some evangelicals who are growing increasingly open to homosexuality and abortion." In fact, he added that "(s)ome evangelicals have embraced revisionist biblical exegesis in an effort to legitimate homosexual behavior and relationships," Ibid.

(3) Then, last week, a believer told me of a recent unnerving decision by Canada's supreme court on bestiality.

(4) My wife finally summed it all up, telling me, "The world is totally unraveling the definition of morality!"

Need: *So we ask, "In view of our current era of spiritual immoral darkness that affects both the world and even some evangelicals, what assurance do we have that is God still willing and able to help us as He did our fathers?!"*

- I. **1 Samuel 7:2-11 records Israel's repentance from worshiping the immoral pagan fertility gods of Baal and Ashtareh along with the Lord, and how God then gave the nation great victory over the Philistines.**
- II. **However, in honoring God for this victory, the prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 7:12 set up a stone and called it "Eben-ezer," meaning "stone of help" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Samuel 7:12) adding the revealing claim, "Thus far has the Lord helped us," 1 Samuel 7:12 NIV.**
- III. **This claim testified of God's great faithfulness in history in aiding Israel in the realm of morality:**
  - A. Samuel's words "thus far" render the Hebrew words, '*ad-hennah*, "until here [of **place, time**]" (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 415; B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 723-725, 244), pointing to **history and geography**.
  - B. Thus, the name "Eben-ezer" that Samuel gave to the **stone** he set up in 1 Samuel. 7:12 testifies of God's countering Israel's former defeat to the Philistines when they took the ark at the **place** of Eben-ezer:
    1. The **spot** where Israel had lost to the Philistines and had seen them take the ark was "Eben-ezer," 4:1-11.
    2. Since then, God had plagued the Philistines with the bubonic plague and toppled the image of their fertility god Dagon at Ashdod (1 Samuel 5:1-12), prompting them to send the ark back to Israel, 1 Samuel 6:1-21.
    3. Finally, the Lord had countered the Philistines, giving Israel back not only the ark, but granting her full victory over the Philistines, explaining Samuel's naming of the **stone** he set up as "Eben-ezer," 7:2-14.
  - C. Yet, the naming of this stone also recalled a very similar victory God that had given Israel at that same **geographical location** 350 years before in Israel's past **history** (Ibid., Ryrie [timeline], p. 2023-2024):
    1. In both battles, Israel had just recovered from spiritual failure by God's grace, Jos. 10:1-14; 1 Sam. 7:2-11:
      - a. Back in Joshua 10:1-14, since Israel had unwisely let herself be tricked by the Canaanite Gibeonites into making a peace treaty with them by invoking God's name, Israel was bound to keep this treaty, coming to the Gibeonites' aid when other Canaanite nations attacked Gibeon, and this set up a big battle for Israel.
      - b. Here in 1 Samuel 7:3-4, Israel had just repented of adopting pagan Baal and Asherah worship.
    2. In both battles, Israel chased her fleeing pagan foes down the valley of Aijalon, Z. P. E. B., v. Four, p. 255:
      - a. Mizpeh where Samuel met with Israel when the Philistines gathered to war against them in 1 Samuel 7:5-7 is only 3 1/2 miles from ancient Gibeon, The MacMillan Bible Atlas, 1968, maps 56, 84.
      - b. In both battles, Israel's pagan foes had fled westward down the valley of Aijalon (Ibid., Z. P. E. B.)
    3. In both battles, God undermined the faith of Israel's foes in their fertility gods by use of a thunderstorm:

- a. In Joshua's battle, God had rained large hail down on the Canaanites, killing more by the hail than Israel had slain by the sword, Joshua 10:11. Since Baal was the Canaanite fertility god of thunder and rain, and his female fertility consort, the goddess Ashtareh, was goddess of love and war (B. K. C., O. T., p. 438), God's use of hailstones to defeat the Canaanites in battle revealed His sovereignty over their fertility gods.
- b. In 1 Samuel 7:10, God terrified the Philistines by directing a great thunder against them, showing His sovereignty over their fertility god Baal, and as they fled in battle, the Philistines also realized God was dominant over Baal's consort, their fertility goddess Ashtareh, Ibid., Z. P. E. B., v. Four, p. 771-772!
4. This victory would have been especially meaningful to Israel: she had just forsaken the worship of Baal and Ashtareh to serve the Lord alone (1 Samuel 7:3-4), so the *way* God gave Israel victory in countering these false fertility gods by means of a thunderstorm was especially rewarding to repentant Israel!
- D. However, this show of God's help that spanned the 300 years from Joshua to Samuel fit God's aid with Israel's morals dating back 1,050 years in her **history** to father Abraham (Ibid., Ryrie [Timeline], p. 2021-2024):
  1. Joshua was victorious over the immoral Canaanites who worshiped fertility gods due to God's promise in Joshua 1:1-9 to help him conquer Canaan if Joshua obeyed God's Word. [especially Joshua 1:8]
  2. God had given that promise upon reminding Joshua that as the Lord had been with Moses, so He would be with Joshua to help him defeat the pagan idolatrous, immoral Canaanites, Joshua 1:5.
  3. Then, the Lord in turn had told Moses at the burning bush that He as the God of Israel's forefathers had seen the affliction of His people in Egyptian bondage, that He would deliver them by sending Moses to perform great miracles that defeated Egypt's false gods, several of which deities were pagan fertility gods, Exodus 3:1-22; 12:12; Ibid., Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 120.
  4. God had initially appeared to Moses upon recalling His 400-year-old promise to Israel's forefather Abraham to get Israel back to Canaan and give her the Promised Land, Exodus 2:23-25; Genesis 15:13-21.
  5. Abraham in turn had been called of God to leave Ur where he worshipped false fertility gods and to follow the Lord, Gen. 12:1-3; Jos. 24:15; Jean-Pierre Isbouts, The Biblical World: An Illustrated Atlas, p. 31-39.
- IV. **Yet, this victory in Samuel's era came only since Israel confessed her immoral idolatry with fertility gods and turned from them to serve God alone, and Samuel had prayed for the Lord's help, 1 Samuel 7:3-10.**

***Lesson:*** *In spite of Israel's defeat due to compromising with immoral paganism, once she turned from her sin, God gave her victory over the Philistines in line with his faithful aid dating back 1,050 years earlier to father Abraham.*

***Application:*** *If concerned about getting God's help in a needy era of spiritual immoral darkness, (1) may we believe in Christ, God's long-promised seed of the once-fertility-deity-worshiper Abraham to bless the world (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:13-16) for salvation, John 3:16. (2) If facing humanly difficult obstacles to blessing especially as it affects morals, may we recall God's faithfulness to help us (a) and confess any sin we commit for Him to forgive us (1 Sam. 7:3-4; 1 John 1:9). (b) Then, may we pray for God's help us like Samuel did in 1 Samuel 7:8-10.*

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

We noted in our introduction the unraveling of the definitions of marriage and morals in the world and some evangelicals, so we apply this message by viewing God's 6,000-year-old helpful Genesis 2:19-25 moral guide:

- (1) First, after creating the first man, God brought the animals to him that he might name them, but no helpmeet for him was found among the animals (Genesis 2:19-20), meaning bestiality is wrong.
- (2) Second, to provide an helpmeet for man, God put him to sleep and surgically took a rib from his body. God thus made divorce as unacceptable as rejecting a part of one's own body, Genesis 2:21; Mark 10:1-12.
- (3) Third, God made a woman from the rib He took from the man. He did not make it into another man, or use several ribs to make several parties, male or female, so marriage is monogamous and heterosexual, Gen. 2:21-22.
- (4) Fourth, when God put the man to sleep and surgically took a rib from him, He did not also surgically alter the man's gender, but kept it the same as at creation opposite the transgender model, Genesis 2:22.
- (5) Fifth, God brought the woman to the man as He had brought him the animals that man might name her, indicating his headship over her, Genesis 2:19, 22; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Genesis 1:10. Man is to lead his wife.
- (6) Sixth, Genesis 2:24 shows a man leaves his parents to become one flesh with his wife opposite incest.
- (7) Seventh, Genesis 2:25 by implication counters pornography, the visual exploitation of another, for the man and his wife prior to the fall, though both being naked in each other's presence, were neither ashamed nor threatened.

**May we trust in Christ for salvation. Then, as believers, may we realize God's timeless faithfulness in being our Help even in our era as He has been in past generations, and so trust and obey Him in all things!**