

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

D. Understanding Why God Often Does Not Fully Judge Ungodly Leaders Quickly

(1 Samuel 2:27-36 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many ungodly leaders today seemingly escape accountability for their wrongs, and it frustrates subordinates:

(1) Laura Behr of Waterbury in her letter to the editor of the Republican-American, May 14, 2016, p. 6A told of her support for presidential hopeful Donald Trump, explaining, "Our nation needs . . . a leader who will . . . stand up and fight for the people of America" opposite the current leadership that she claimed is responsible for "cuts in the military" that "have caused our national security to be degraded, . . . (t)he Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which was enacted illegally" and "has caused tax increases, loss of preferred health insurance policies and huge premium increases" and "(o)ur national debt" that "is \$19 trillion and climbing."

Yet, some such conservatives are having second thoughts about Mr. Trump now that he is warming up to the GOP establishment, and the editor of the Republican-American (Ibid.) cited Bret Stephens' May 10 article, "Hillary: The Conservative Hope" in The Wall Street Journal where he wrote: "Republicans need to understand before casting their lot with a presumptive nominee they abhor" like Mr. "Trump" that "(i)f the next presidency is going to be a disaster, why should the GOP want to own it?" He claimed that Hillary Clinton is thus the conservative's best hope.

However, conservatives abhor Mrs. Clinton far more, so one must ask Mr. Stephens why conservatives must choose between bad and worse in the voting booth, a symptom of the vacuum of godliness in the nation's leaders!

The problem is so great, one of our members recently asked me if it was sin for him to vote for any candidate!

(2) The current presidential administration is pushing the transgender bathroom use issue, creating a stir as opponents fear it will leave women and children exposed to sexual predators in public restrooms. (Associated Press, "States dig in against directive on transgender bathroom use," Ibid., Republican-American, p. 7a) Nevertheless, the head of the Roman Catholic Church is trying to soften the Church's stand on morals, to where someone recently asked me in our Adult Sunday School Class what Catholic laymen are going to do about it since they can't fire the pope!

Need: So we ask, "How does God want us to deal with leaders who seem to promote evil without accountability?!"

- I. In 1 Samuel 2:27-36, God sent a man of God, a prophet to Israel's high priest, Eli, announcing the Lord's coming judgment for the vile, oppressive leadership of the priests in Eli's family line:**
 - A. The prophet denounced the failure of Eli and his sons to fulfill their God-assigned duties passed down from their ancestor Aaron to respect God's offerings versus abusing them for personal gain, 1 Sam. 2:27-30a, 12-17.
 - B. Thus, God planned to judge them, (1) removing Eli's line from priestly leadership (v. 30b-31), (2) weakening his family line (v. 32-33), (3) killing Eli's wicked, immoral sons in a single day (v. 34, 22), (4) replacing Eli's line with another line of priests (v. 35) and (5) making those left in Eli's line beg for food due to their evil in fattening themselves with the choice parts of the sacrifices that belonged to God and His people (v. 36, 14).
- II. However, this judgment occurred in prolonged stages that stretched out over a long period of time:**
 - A. Eli's line was partially eradicated in Saul's reign in 1 Samuel 22:11-19, what occurred about 30 years after this prophecy was made, Ryrie Study Bib., KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Sam. 2:21-35; p. 2025; Z. P. E. B., v. Five, p. 253.
 - B. Then, at the start of Solomon's reign, over 130 years after this prophecy on replacing Eli's line in the priestly leadership, the high priest, Solomon replaced Abiathar of Eli's line with Zadok of another priestly line because Abiathar had tried to help Absalom's brother, Adonijah seize the throne, 1 Kings 2:26-27, 35. (Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 435)
- III. Studying God's administration of this judgment reveals He staggered its application over a prolonged period of time to preserve the stability of the people who had been so afflicted by Eli's priestly line:**
 - A. When God fulfilled His promise to slay Eli's evil sons in one day (1 Samuel 2:34) and Eli heard of their deaths, he himself fell over backward in shock, breaking his neck and consequently dying, 1 Samuel 4:12-18.
 - B. At that same time, the ark of the Lord was taken by the Philistines who also destroyed the city of Shiloh where the tabernacle was pitched and where Samuel also served the Lord, 1 Samuel 4:1-11; Ibid.
 - C. Thus, the loss of the ark, the fall of Shiloh where the tabernacle was pitched and where Samuel ministered, the death of the high priest and his two sons in a single day at a time when there was no king or judge to rule Israel was a huge shock not only to Israel, but to Samuel who had been under the leadership of Eli at Shiloh!

- D. Accordingly, God did not immediately uproot the rule of Eli's priestly line along with the many crises that occurred along with Eli's death; rather, (1) He waited until the arrival of Saul's rule to start to decrease the people in Eli's line with the slaying of the priestly city by Doeg the Edomite and (2) He waited until the arrival of Solomon's reign to make the final transition from Eli's line to another priestly line of leadership when there was greater stability in Israel with the presence of an established monarchy!

Lesson: *God staggered the administration of His judgments against Eli's line of priests over a generation of time to preserve the national stability of the people in Israel who were innocent of their leaders' sins.*

Application: *(1) May we believe in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) If confronted by evil in leaders whose sins seem to go unchecked, may we realize that God WILL judge them IN TIME in ways that OFTEN will NOT UPSET the STABILITY of those subordinates who are innocent of their leaders' sins. (3) May we realize that this truth applies to God's dealings with leaders in all institutions -- government, business, church, marriage and family (Ephesians 5:22-6:9). (4) If we are in leadership and realize we have sinned in our role, may we confess it to the Lord and correct our ways to avoid God's EVENTUAL severe discipline!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

When the Augustinian monk, Martin Luther was summoned to the 1521 Diet of Worms, an assembly of the states of the Holy Roman Empire, the Emperor's purpose was not to hear Luther's defense of his evangelical theology, but to force him to recant so as to stop Luther's teaching. (James Atkinson, The Great Light: Luther and Reformation, 1968, p. 61-63) The pope had earlier drawn up a bull of excommunication that referred to Luther as "(a) wild boar" that had entered the vineyard of the Lord, and he had one of his officials present it to Luther, a bull that dreadfully lacked as "(n)either the Pope nor [Catholic theologian John] Eck had read Luther's writings" and some of the criticisms of Luther in it were "torn from their context" while "others were unintelligible," Ibid., p. 62, 53.

When Mr. Luther had received the bull, he had done the unthinkable in throwing it into a bonfire in the presence of friends and students at Wittenberg on December 10, 1520, sending "(a) thrill through Europe when it learned that a man with no more weight behind him than his faith in God had burned a papal bull. It was the fiery signal of emancipation. The individual soul had discovered its true value and therefore its authority," Ibid., p. 63.

Accordingly, the papal nuncio, Aleander, planned "to have Luther put under the ban at once and unheard, and he worked hard to effect this" at the diet of Worms. Luther was there publicly ordered to give "a plain answer to a plain question . . . 'Will you recant? Yes or No?'" (Ibid., p. 66-67)

"It was the wrong kind of court, utterly incompetent to deal with the issues. Luther needed a small court of open-minded scholars who would listen to his case. Be that as it may, Luther stood firm and resisted both Emperor and Pope in the interests of truth," Ibid., p. 67. "Unless he were proved wrong on the basis of scripture and sound reason (for popes and councils had been known to err and could err again), he was bound fast by his conscience to the Word of God, He could not and would not recant. 'May God help me,' he added, 'Amen' . . . It was one of the world's greatest moments." (Ibid.)

Following the diet, as we well know from history, and he was on his way home, Martin Luther was kidnapped by a friendly official's forces and hidden in the Wartburg Castle, and when the "drawbridge rattled up behind him that April night it was the curtain to Luther's person biography. His life was no longer his own, but was to be inextricably bound up with the evangelical cause he had fathered," Ibid., p. 68.

It took a long time for the effects of Luther's stand to work its influence in history under God's oversight, for the powers of sin that ruled at the time were deeply entrenched. Yet, "(t)he Reformation went on at Wittenberg without Luther" (Ibid.) and today, nearly 500 years afterward, we are its eventual beneficiaries.

In it all, and most importantly, "Luther never saw it as his role to re-organize the Church or to re-systematize its theology: he simply preached the Word of God. He sowed the seed and left it to germinate, certain that the Word of God would not return void, and believing that this Word would permeate and restore the Church," Ibid., p. 88.

That is why we today at Nepaug Bible Church handle the religious and political world about us the same way - we focus on sowing the seed, leaving it to germinate, certain that the Word of God will do its perfect work, knowing that God will in time deal with sin in ways that still preserve important human institutions.

In facing ungodly leaders who seemingly function without accountability for their sins, may we like Martin Luther remain faithful to God's calling in our personal lives, leaving it to the Lord to deal IN TIME with such leaders in ways that will still preserve the stability of human institutions for the glory of God.