

44. The Book of 1Samuel—28:1-20

“Dead Wrong”

(4/24/16)

As we come to chapter 28 we come to the final hours in the life of King Saul.

He doesn't actually die until chapter 31—but between the events of chapter 28 and his death in chapter 31 is only a twenty-four hour span of time.

I. The Situation with the Philistines—v.1-2

1 Samuel 28:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men." ² And David said to Achish, "Surely you know what your servant can do." And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever."

This takes us back to our study last week in chapter 27. (Explain)

II. The Silence of God—v.4-6

1Samuel 28:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa.

⁵ When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.
⁶ And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

Now of course Saul had the Word of God on parchment (The Torah)—but he needed personal and specific instructions from the Lord in how he should proceed in *this* situation.

In the Bible whenever God stopped speaking to a person or to a people (a nation) it was often a sign of judgment upon them—

Amos 8:11-12 (NKJV)

¹¹ "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD. ¹² They shall wander from sea to sea, And from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, But shall not find it.

Proverbs 1:28-31 (NKJV)

²⁸ "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. ²⁹ Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD, ³⁰ They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. ³¹ Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies.

God will only speak to a person or a nation so long before He says,

"You don't want to hear My word because your heart is full of rebellion—therefore I will no longer speak to you and all that remains is judgment."

And that's why in Jeremiah 7:16 God said to Jeremiah, *"Don't pray any longer for this people—there is no longer any hope for them."*

Saul had hardened his heart to God and refused to listen to and obey what God commanded him to do long before this—

1 Samuel 15:10-11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹ "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul *as* king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.

Saul stopped listening to God—and so now God has stopped speaking to him.

This puts Saul into a panic because he really needs to hear from God quickly as the Philistines are amassing their troops and will soon be attacking.

And so he does something really stupid and sinful—first of all we read:

III. The Sin of Saul—v.3, 7-15

1 Samuel 28:3 (NKJV)

³ Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land...

We already learned of Samuel's death back in chapter 25:1—but here the Holy Spirit repeats it to emphasize Saul's predicament.

When Samuel was alive he told Saul and the people what they needed to do to defeat the Philistines—but now he was gone and Saul had cut himself off from the Word of the Lord.

Now verse 3 tells us that earlier in his reign, when he was closer to God, Saul had put the mediums and spiritists out of the land of Israel.

He was right to do that because in the law of God all forms of divination, necromancy and spiritism were condemned by God.

Leviticus 19:31 (NKJV)

³¹ 'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.

Leviticus 20:6 (NKJV)

⁶ 'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.

Deuteronomy 18:9-13 (NKJV)

⁹ "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. ¹⁰ There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or* a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹² For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. ¹³ You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.

And so once again Saul was right to cleanse the land of all of the spiritists and mediums—but now he ‘needs’ one to make contact with Samuel the only one Saul figured could give him counsel in this situation with the Philistines.

However this was a grave sin—and the last straw in a long list of rebellious actions that Saul engaged in over the course of his reign as king (forty years).

Many years earlier Samuel had rebuked Saul to his face for one particular act of rebellion—

1 Samuel 15:22-23 (NKJV)

²² So Samuel said: "Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from *being* king."

This was the last time Saul had heard Samuel's voice—condemning him for not obeying what God had commanded him to do.

And now Saul compounds his rebellion by seeking out a medium to call up Samuel from the dead so he could enquire of him.

1 Samuel 28:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "In fact, *there is* a woman who is a medium at En Dor."

Traditionally this woman is referred to as “the Witch of Endor”.

However the Hebrew word doesn't mean *witch* (although she may have been that also) it carries the idea of someone “*mumbling*” or “*muttering*”.

In other words she was a **medium** or a **necromancer**—one who would speak with a mumbling sound as when in a trance and who's vocal cords had been taken over by a spirit or the ghost of a dead person who was now speaking through them.

And that's what a medium does—they stand in-between the world of the living and the dead and act as a channel, bridging the gap and allowing one side to communicate with the other.

They were often referred to simply as “whisperers” or “mutterers” by the Jewish people back then because of the strange way they sounded when channeling the dead.

These mediums were an ongoing problem for the nation—primarily because the people kept seeking them out.

And the more the people of Israel turned to mediums and spiritists for guidance and answers to their problems—the more God pleaded with them through His prophets to turn back to Him and *His* word—

Isaiah 8:19-20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek* the dead on behalf of the living?

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them. (Comment)

However God's people didn't heed His admonitions or turn from their enchantments—and so God abandoned them to their idolatry and occultism—

Isaiah 47:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² "Stand now with your enchantments And the multitude of your sorceries, In which you have labored from your youth-- Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you will prevail. ¹³ You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels; Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, *And* the monthly prognosticators Stand up and save you From what shall come upon you.

1 Samuel 28:7-10 (NKJV)

⁷ Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "In fact, *there is* a woman who is a medium at En Dor." ⁸ **So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a seance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you."** ⁹ Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" ¹⁰ And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing."

Saul's promise to this medium shows us how demented and twisted his thinking had become.

Here he's swearing an oath in the Lord's name that this woman would be spared death if she helped Saul break God's word by conducting a séance for him!

1 Samuel 28:11-15 (NKJV)

¹¹ Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." ¹² When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you *are* Saul!" ¹³ And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth." ¹⁴ So he said to her, "What *is* his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he *is* covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground and bowed down. ¹⁵ Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do."

This is one of those passages that has generated a lot of controversy—what’s going on here?

Did this medium really conjure up Samuel or was this a demon impersonating Samuel or what?!

Let me say up front that I believe this was *really* Samuel brought up from the dead.

That then begs the question—“*why did God allow a medium (an instrument of the devil) to conjure up Samuel from the dead—is God telling us that mediums can really conjure up the dead?*”

No I don’t believe that mediums can really conjure up the dead—“*yes but you just said that you believe this was really Samuel?*”

I do believe that—but not because this woman conjured him up.

I believe she had demonic powers and that demons would manifest themselves when she conducted her séances impersonating the dead.

I believe this is what really happens with mediums who have supernatural powers (many are just fakes)—they conjure up demons who then impersonate the dead. (Elaborate)

But this was something different, *she* didn't bring Samuel up from the dead—I believe that because it freaked her out when she saw him telling me she didn't do this—God allowed Samuel to come up from Sheol to speak to Saul one last time.

There are those Christians who adamantly maintain that this couldn't have been Samuel appearing from the underworld because God would never have allowed that since it would endorse this kind of thing.

And yet didn't God allow Moses and Elijah to come from the afterlife to speak to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17?

This was something that God allowed not something the medium of Endor did.

If God wants to allow Moses, Elijah, Samuel or anyone else who has died to come from the afterlife and speak to someone for His purpose He can do it because He's God and He does what He wants.

But understand that if He does do it He does so without endorsing those in the occult who practice these things—which He has forbidden *them* from doing primarily because they are not contacting the dead but channeling demons who then deceive with false doctrine.

One commentator concurs when he said—

“I believe that the woman of En-dor had no power over Samuel; and that no incantation can avail over any departed saint of God, nor indeed over any human disembodied spirit. Samuel really came, but not because the medium called for him. Samuel appeared because God had a special purpose for it.”

Okay, so far we've seen—

I. The Situation with the Philistines—v.1-2

II. The Silence of God—v.4-6

III. The Sin of Saul—v.3, 7-15

IV. The Sentence of Samuel—v.16-20

The dictionary defines the word 'sentence' in the judicial sense as:

"An authoritative decision; a judicial judgment or decree, especially the judicial determination of the punishment to be inflicted on a convicted criminal."

Samuel the judge and prophet (spokesman for God) now does that very thing upon Saul's life—he pronounces God's sentence upon him:

1 Samuel 28:16-20 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Then Samuel said: "Why then do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? ¹⁷ And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me [1Samuel 15:28]. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. ¹⁸ Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. ¹⁹ Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons *will be* with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." ²⁰ Then immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night.

Saul asked Samuel '*what should I do*'—Samuel never told him what to do because it was too late to *do* anything.

All Samuel told him was what *would* happen—that God’s judgment was already in motion.

Saul had forty years in which he could have repented—but he remained rebellious up until the end of his life and had no one to blame for the judgment of God upon his life but himself—

1 Chronicles 10:13 (NKJV)

¹³ So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance.

Here’s the thing—God did give Saul 24 more hours to repent before he died—what a gift from God that was!

And yet he didn’t make use of it—we don’t see anything from the remaining chapters of 1 Samuel that indicate Saul repented and got his life right with God before he died.

I have serious doubts whether we’re going to see Saul in heaven someday—I think there’s a good chance he will wind up in hell.

Many point to Samuel’s statement “**and tomorrow you and your sons *will be with me***” as proof that Saul was saved because he was going to be with Samuel when he died—and we know without a doubt that Samuel was saved.

I believe that statement simply means that Saul was going to join the dead along with Samuel—but not necessarily the believing dead.

Jesus taught us in Luke 16:19-31 that the place where the dead went is divided into two compartments one for the unbelieving dead (a place of torment) and the other for the believing dead (a place of comfort known as Abraham’s bosom).

Saul would be in the same *general* area as Samuel (Sheol/Hades), but not necessarily in the same *specific place* (Abraham's bosom).

Let me close by saying this—we are living at a time in our nation's history where many are practicing the same things that Israel was messing around with back then right before God judged them.

We see many in our nation involved in the occult and using things like séances, crystal balls, tarot cards, horoscopes and Ouija Boards to contact the dead and divine the future.

One pastor rightly comments on this—

“[These] are modern attempts to practice forms of Spiritism. They are dangerous links to the demonic, even if undertaken in a spirit of fun. Christians should have nothing to do with occultic arts or practices.”

Unfortunately there are numerous techniques that God's people are using to contact Him—“mantra meditation, visualization, lectio divina, labyrinth prayer” and other ancient eastern mystical techniques.

This is all part of the Last Days deception that the New Testament writers warned us would be coming into the church just prior to Jesus' return—the Great Apostasy.

I'd like to spend next Sunday looking at this.