

Day 293 - FRIDAY: November 24th

1 Samuel 28

1 Samuel 28:1–25 NKJV

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." So 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." 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. Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. 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." 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 séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you." 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?" And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." 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!" 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." 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. 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." Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 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. 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." 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. And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled, and said to him, "Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have put my life in my hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me. Now therefore, please, heed also the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you; and eat, that you may have

strength when you go on your way." But he refused and said, "I will not eat." So his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he heeded their voice. Then he arose from the ground and sat on the bed. Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she hastened to kill it. And she took flour and kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread from it. So she brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "The Philistines move from Aphek, where they had dismissed David (1 Samuel 29), to Jezreel (29:11) to confront Saul and the Israelites. They gather at the town of Shunem, a place we will again read about in the days of the prophet Elisha (see 2 Kings 4:8), while Saul pitches his camp at Mount Gilboa, about four miles south (1 Samuel 23:4).

David had previously stated regarding Saul, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish" (1 Samuel 26:10). Saul's time to die is now at hand. It is a very gloomy and depressing time for him. Samuel has died and any

appeal to God goes unanswered. God explains to us, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He *will not hear*" (Isaiah 59:2). Saul does not have the confidence he possessed when God's Spirit was working with him (compare 1 Samuel 11:6; 1 Samuel 16:14). The day before the battle (1 Samuel 28:19), he becomes fearful and desperate and, instead of true repentance, once again turns away from God—this time by essentially turning to Satan for an answer.

God's instructions to Israel are quite clear in this matter: "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 19:31).

"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" (20:6).

"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, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 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" (Deuteronomy 18:10–12). The original King James Version renders "medium" as "consulter with familiar spirits."

Saul in fact, during his reign, did obey God's instruction in this matter by removing these "abominations" from the land (1 Samuel 28:3). Evidently, though, there is at least one who evaded detection, a woman of the town of En Dor.

Now we come to a two-part question that many, including many biblical scholars, do not know how to answer: Does the woman really conjure up a spirit? And is that spirit actually the prophet Samuel? Let's look at some facts:

Some would argue that there is no entity really brought up here because Saul does not actually see one himself—he only reasons that Samuel is present from the woman's description. But whether or not the woman is a fraud and trickster, what happens surprises even her (verse 12). And even though Saul does not see anyone, the account says that "the woman saw Samuel" (verse 12). Moreover, there is clearly spoken communication from this "Samuel" (verses 15–16). But is this truly Samuel, the deceased prophet of God? It would not *have* to be from the wording here. For instance, a person on a hallucinogenic drug might say he

saw something that was not really there, and we would consider that he did "see" it—seeing in this context being a matter of perception rather than sensory input from light actually entering the eye. Since the Bible says the entity spoke, something was definitely present. But what the woman sees is not actually visible to the naked eye—or Saul would be able to see it too. This means that the image the woman sees must be projected into her mind through supernatural means. So we ask: Is the prophet Samuel the one doing this?

First of all, the Bible very clearly points to a future *resurrection* of the dead. Many "orthodox" believers, however, maintain that this is simply the rejoining of a conscious, disembodied soul with a new body. Yet the Bible repeatedly describes the current state of the dead as one of "sleep" (Daniel 12:2; 1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:14–15; 2 Peter 3:4). Ecclesiastes makes it even more clear: "For the living know that they will die; but *the dead know nothing.... for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going*" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, Ecclesiastes 9:10). Thus, a dead person is completely unconscious. The resurrection is an awakening—a return to consciousness.

What this means is that there is no such thing as ghosts, as they are commonly defined—the spirits of the dead still wandering the earth. But there certainly *are* spirit beings who, unable to materialize, can appear as ghostly apparitions (compare Luke 24:39—where Christ shows His disciples that He is *not* one of these). The Bible elsewhere calls these beings unclean spirits—or demons. They are fallen angels, spirit beings who have rebelled against God under the arch-demon, Satan the Devil.

Now, the woman of En Dor is a medium, consulting with, as already noted, "familiar *spirits*" (1 Samuel 28:7 KJV). Are these dead people? No. For we have already seen that there is no consciousness in death. Consider also: Why would God impose the death penalty for communicating with dead friends and relatives if that were really possible? One scholar explains: "The reason the death penalty was inflicted for consulting 'familiar spirits' is that these were 'evil spirits,' or fallen angels impersonating the dead.... God hardly could have prescribed the death penalty for communicating with the spirits of deceased loved ones if such spirits existed and if such a communication were possible. There is no moral reason for God to outlaw, on pain of death, the human desire to communicate with

deceased loved ones. The problem is that such communication is impossible, because the dead are unconscious and do not communicate with the living. Any communication that occurs is not with the spirit of the dead, but with evil spirits" (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection?*, 1997, p. 168).

Furthermore, it would be quite odd for God to send a message to Saul through the prophet Samuel when the account very clearly states that God will not answer Saul's inquiries "either by dreams or by Urim *or by the prophets*" (verse 6). And consider that this is because of Saul's disobedience (compare Isaiah 59:2). So why would God now go ahead and answer him in the face of even *greater* disobedience on Saul's part in the use of a medium? That just does not seem reasonable.

Thus, the being the medium sees ascending out of the earth (1 Samuel 28:13) is nothing more than a demon. Even "the church fathers [early Catholic theologians] believed that a demon impersonated Samuel and appeared to Saul" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 28:12). Saul only *perceives* that it must be Samuel. He certainly *wants* it to be Samuel! The apostle Paul is inspired to write: "And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into [or disguises himself as] an

angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into [or disguise themselves as] *ministers of righteousness*, whose end will be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:14–15). So it would not be unusual for a demon to appear as Samuel. And we know from all other scriptures that pertain to this subject that this is *not* the prophet Samuel speaking.

Let's look at the conclusion of Saul's deed. He certainly doesn't come away with *anything* profitable. In fact, he is so disheartened that he can barely eat! These scriptures should once again remind us of God's instructions *against* consulting with the evil spirit realm.”

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I don't have anything additional to add to this section.