

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 1 SAMUEL 28

1 SAMUEL 28:1-2 - WAR RESUMES BETWEEN ISRAEL & PHILISTINE'S

V. 1 - BECAUSE ACHISH HAD WELCOMED DAVID & HIS MEN, HE NOW EXPECTS THEM TO SIDE WITH HIM. QUITE THE DILEMMA FOR DAVID, THE FUTURE KING OF ISRAEL.

1 SAMUEL 28:4-8 - GREATLY AFRAID, SAUL ASKS FOR MEDIUM

V. 4 - "THE PHILISTINES GATHERED TOGETHER" - THE UNITED PHILISTINE NATION WAS MADE UP OF REGIONAL KINGS (EX: ACHISH OF GATH, CP. 1 SAM. 6.17) WHO NOW ASSEMBLE TOGETHER AND PROCEED TO MARCH INTO ISRAEL. THEY CAMP IN SHUNEM, A CITY LOCATED IN THE JEZREEL VALLEY. SCHOLARS SUGGEST THIS REGION WOULD HAVE GIVEN THE PHILISTINE'S A TREMENDOUS MILITARY ADVANTAGE BECAUSE THE VALLEY REGION WOULD HAVE ALLOWED THEM TO USE THEIR CHARIOTS.

1 SAMUEL 29:1-2 - NOW THE PHILISTINES GATHERED TOGETHER ALL THEIR ARMIES TO APHEK, WHILE THE ISRAELITES WERE CAMPING BY THE SPRING WHICH IS IN JEZREEL. 2 AND THE LORDS OF THE PHILISTINES WERE PROCEEDING ON BY HUNDREDS AND BY THOUSANDS, AND DAVID AND HIS MEN WERE PROCEEDING ON IN THE REAR WITH ACHISH.

(THIS SECTION IS OUT OF CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER. THE NARRATOR GIVES US THE STORY OF SAUL & THE MEDIUM OF ENDOR BEFORE RETURNING TO THE NEWS OF DAVID & THE PHILISTINES. THE STORY OF CHAPTER 28 TAKES PLACE THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE.)

V. 3, 5 - SET IN LIGHT OF THE REMINDER THAT SAMUEL HAD DIED, WE WILL READ A STORY ILLUSTRATING SAUL'S DESPERATION AND

FEAR. SAUL WAS "AFRAID AND HIS HEART TREMBLED GREATLY (V. 5)" AND RECEIVED NO ANSWER FROM THE LORD. SAUL IS NOT SEEKING REPENTANCE OR FORGIVENESS - HE IS SELFISHLY SEEKING A BAILOUT.

V. 7-8 - SAUL IS SO DESPERATE AND FEARFUL THAT HE WILL SEEK ANSWERS WHEREVER THEY MAY BE FOUND, EVEN FROM A "MEDIUM". SUCH INDIVIDUALS WERE FORBIDDEN IN ISRAEL, AS THEY REPRESENTED EVIL (DEMONIC) SOURCES OF INFORMATION WHICH COMPETED AGAINST GOD'S TRUTH AND GOD'S PROPHETS.



LEVITICUS 19:31 - 'DO NOT TURN TO MEDIUMS OR SPIRITISTS; DO NOT SEEK THEM OUT TO BE DEFILED BY THEM. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD.

LEVITICUS 20:27 - 'NOW A MAN OR A WOMAN WHO IS A MEDIUM OR A SPIRITIST SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH. THEY SHALL BE STONED WITH STONES, THEIR BLOODGUILTINESS IS UPON THEM.'

DEUTERONOMY 18:10 - "THERE SHALL NOT BE FOUND AMONG YOU ANYONE WHO...USES DIVINATION, ONE WHO PRACTICES WITCHCRAFT, OR ONE WHO INTERPRETS OMENS, OR A SORCERER,

SAUL MUST HAVE KNOWN THE MEDIUMS WERE EVIL AND FORBIDDEN, FOR HE HAD PREVIOUSLY "REMOVED FROM THE LAND THOSE WHO WERE MEDIUMS AND SPIRITISTS (V. 3)." HE ALSO APPROACHES THE MEDIUM "DISGUISED" WITH "OTHER CLOTHES" AND AT NIGHT. IN FACT, "THE MAP ITSELF SUGGESTS HOW DESPERATE SAUL WAS. ENDOR WAS 2 OR 3 MILES NORTHEAST OF SHUNEM...THIS MEANS SAUL HAD TO SKIRT THE PHILISTINE CAMP IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT ENDOR. (DALE RALPH DAVIS, "FOCUS ON THE BIBLE COMMENTARY: 1 SAMUEL", P. 296")

1 SAMUEL 28:9-19 - THE MEDIUM AGREES TO WORK FOR SAUL, SAMUEL SPEAKS

V. 9-10 - SAUL VOWS TO NOT PUNISH THE WOMAN, EVEN THOUGH PREVIOUSLY HE HAD OUTLAWED SUCH PRACTICE. SHE KNOWS THAT HER BUSINESS IS ILLEGAL.

V. 15 - SAUL PLEADS WITH SAMUEL FOR INSIGHT INTO "WHAT TO DO".

V. 19 - ISRAEL IS GOING TO LOSE THE FIGHT AGAINST THE PHILISTINES AND SAUL AND HIS SONS ARE GOING TO DIE. THE ARMY OF ISRAEL BEING GIVEN OVER TO THE PHILISTINE'S IS THE LORD'S DOING IN JUDGMENT UPON SAUL (AND HIS HOUSE) FOR HIS COMPLETE REBELLION AGAINST THE LORD.

THE MEDIUM AT ENDOR: LOOKING AT THE OPTIONS:

1 - THIS WAS A DEMONIC SPIRIT AND THE WOMAN DECEIVES SAUL. WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE "FAMILIAR SPIRITS" - EVIL SPIRITS THAT ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE PEOPLE OR SITUATIONS THEY ARE INVOLVED IN AND THUS CAN SEEM TO GIVE SOMEWHAT ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT A SITUATION. SCRIPTURE TEACHES THAT THE DEAD ARE DEAD, AWAITING RESURRECTION AND THUS SAMUEL IS NOT CONSCIOUS SOMEWHERE (EVEN AS A SPIRIT) AND ABLE TO INTERACT WITH SAUL. SHE NEVER SAYS IT IS SAMUEL, BUT AN OLD MAN IN A ROBE THAT SAUL THEN DECLARES THAT IT MUST BE SAMUEL. WE ALSO KNOW THAT GOD CAN HIJACK EVIL PROPHETS AND GIVE TRUE MESSAGES (EX: BALAAM IN NUMBERS 22-24) AND THAT MAY BE WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE. EVEN SO, THIS OPTION COMES WITH PROBLEMS AS THE SPEAKER IS IDENTIFIED AS SAMUEL THROUGHOUT THE TEXT, REFERENCES "THE LORD" 7X AND GIVES A TRUE PROPHECY. HOWEVER, THE NARRATOR NEVER GIVES INFO THAT IT WAS AN EVIL SPIRIT, YET IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMPLY OTHERWISE FOR WIDER THEOLOGICAL REASONS.

2 - THIS IS A UNIQUE SITUATION IN WHICH GOD MOMENTARILY BRINGS SAMUEL BACK TO LIFE EITHER THROUGH RESURRECTION OR VISION. THE MEDIUM OF ENDOR CLEARLY REACTS TO THIS EVENT WITH SHOCK (V. 12 - "WHEN THE WOMAN SAW SAMUEL, SHE

cried out with a loud voice"), probably because her other séances don't happen like this. Samuel comes and reminds Saul of the prophecy already spoken and adds the new information that Saul and his sons would die the next day. Yet, this option comes with its own problems as it implies the medium has power to raise the dead or that she is able to give true prophecy.

God uses this event, and the forbidden practice, to bring judgment on Saul. He has fully rejected God at this point, and is seeking to find comfort and direction from a medium. Rather than him finding such things, he hears of his final (and soon to happen) judgment. Whether God hijacks the woman's/demon's message or allows Samuel a brief moment of resurrection (via vision?) it is for this final purpose of judging Saul.

In any of these cases, Saul's actions are actions of rebellion and sin. Even though a true prophecy comes from this incident, the way in which it comes is not justifying the practice of the medium.

1 CHRONICLES 10:13-14 - SO SAUL DIED FOR HIS TRESPASS WHICH HE COMMITTED AGAINST THE LORD, BECAUSE OF THE WORD OF THE LORD WHICH HE DID NOT KEEP; **AND ALSO BECAUSE HE ASKED COUNSEL OF A MEDIUM, MAKING INQUIRY OF IT** 14 AND DID NOT INQUIRE OF THE LORD. THEREFORE HE KILLED HIM AND TURNED THE KINGDOM TO DAVID THE SON OF JESSE.

We should not consult with mediums, psychics, etc. They are demonic workers and/or liars/con-artists. (Biblical Christians firmly believe in life after death, but by means of resurrection). The dead are not able to communicate with the living because they are dead. Samuel himself in this chapter tells us that when Saul and his sons died the next day they will be "with me" (aka dead). This speaks to the fact that the state of both the righteous (Samuel) and the wicked (Saul) are the same until the final resurrection to life or judgment on the last day. (cp. Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29 etc.). Also scripture tells us that "the dead know nothing..." (Ecc. 9:5, etc) and that "there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in (the grave) (Ecc. 9:10)." Demonic activity must be involved.

Dale Ralph Adams: "Doesn't this case of effective necromancy open the way for justifying the practice of consulting the dead? No, because Deuteronomy 18 has already stated the doctrinal position. Moreover, this case is simply the exception that proves the rule. That is, it is as if 1 Samuel 28 is saying, "Now can you see why this sort of hokey-pokey is prohibited in Israel? Look at Saul- it only incapacitates and destroys." (ibid , pg 292).

Those who consult mediums and spiritists are opening up themselves to demonic influence which may begin as a comforting thing but always ends in evil, torment, fear and pain (not to mention expensive). They are also in direct opposition to the words of God. Just because something is available or even legal does not mean it is in line with obedience to Christ. The followers of Christ should never "dabble" in the occult.

In contrast, the Lord knows the beginning from the end (Isaiah 46:10) and gives wisdom to those who ask (James 1:5). The fruit of seeking the Lord through Jesus Christ is peace, joy, hope and comfort. God does speak to his people via the Holy Spirit (personally and through others) and also answers prayers. And for our generation, he has already spoken so many truths via the scriptures. We are well equipped to know what to do (cp. v. 15).

1 SAMUEL 28:20-25 - SAUL'S RESPONSE TO THE INFORMATION

V. 20 - SAUL IS COMPLETELY DEVASTATED. THIS IS THE END AND HE KNOWS IT.

Q - WHAT DO YOU THINK OF SAUL'S RESPONSE TO SAMUEL'S MESSAGE?

Q - WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE MEDIUM'S RESPONSE TO SAUL'S BEHAVIOR?

1 SAMUEL 28:25 - SHE BROUGHT IT BEFORE SAUL AND HIS SERVANTS, AND THEY ATE. THEN THEY AROSE AND WENT AWAY THAT NIGHT.

JOHN 13:26-30 - JESUS THEN ANSWERED (THE QUESTION OF WHO WOULD BETRAY HIM), "THAT IS THE ONE FOR WHOM I SHALL DIP THE MORSEL AND GIVE IT TO HIM." SO WHEN HE HAD DIPPED THE MORSEL, HE TOOK AND GAVE IT TO JUDAS, THE SON OF SIMON ISCARIOT. 27 AFTER THE MORSEL, SATAN THEN ENTERED INTO HIM. THEREFORE JESUS SAID TO HIM, "WHAT YOU DO, DO QUICKLY." 28 NOW NO ONE OF THOSE RECLINING AT THE TABLE KNEW FOR WHAT PURPOSE HE HAD SAID THIS TO HIM. 29 FOR SOME WERE SUPPOSING, BECAUSE JUDAS HAD THE MONEY BOX, THAT JESUS WAS SAYING TO HIM, "BUY THE THINGS WE HAVE NEED OF FOR THE FEAST"; OR ELSE, THAT HE SHOULD GIVE SOMETHING TO THE POOR. 30 SO AFTER RECEIVING THE MORSEL HE WENT OUT IMMEDIATELY; AND IT WAS NIGHT.

THIS IS THE FINAL ACT OF SAUL'S REBELLION AGAINST THE LORD. AND WHAT FOLLOW WILL BE THE FINAL JUDGMENT UPON SAUL. THOUGH HE LIVED AND RULED FOR YEARS AFTER HIS DISOBEDIENCE, HE NEVER HUMBLE SOUGHT THE LORD FOR FORGIVENESS AND REPENTANCE. AS A RESULT, GOD'S REJECTION WAS FINAL. AND SADLY, HIS JUDGMENT WILL HAVE RIPPLE EFFECTS UPON THE ENTIRE NATION. YET, THIS BETRAYAL AND JUDGMENT WILL LEAD TO SALVATION AND HOPE FOR ISRAEL THROUGH DAVID.