

# **Bible Study April 17, 2024**

## **1 SAMUEL 28 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)**

***<sup>1</sup> In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army."***

***<sup>2</sup> David said, "Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do."***

***Achish replied, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."***

Achish's request put David in a difficult position. To refuse to help Achish fight the Israelites would give away the fact that David was loyal to Israel and endanger the lives of his soldiers and family. But to fight his own people would hurt those he loved and would soon lead. David, however, never had to solve his dilemma because God protected him. The other Philistine leaders objected to his presence in battle; thus, he did not have to fight his fellow Israelites.

### **Deuteronomy 18:10-12 (NIV)**

***<sup>10</sup> Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, <sup>11</sup> or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. <sup>12</sup> Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you.***

### **Leviticus 19:31 (NIV)**

***<sup>31</sup> "Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.***

### **Saul and the Medium at Endor**

***<sup>3</sup> Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land.***

***<sup>4</sup> The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. <sup>5</sup> When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. <sup>6</sup> He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.***

Casting sacred lots meant using the Urim and Thummim to determine God's guidance in certain matters.

***<sup>7</sup> Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."***

***"There is one in Endor," they said.***

Saul was overwhelmed at the sight of the Philistine army, so he turned to the occult. It is far better to regard life's difficulties and obstacles as reminders to turn in God's direction and depend on him. As we see from Saul's story, turning to anything or anyone other than God leads only to disaster.

***<sup>8</sup> So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. "Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name."***

Saul had banned all mediums and spiritists (those who consult with the spirits of the dead) from Israel, but in desperation he turned to one for counsel. Endor was in Israelite territory, on the border with Philistia, so the medium either could practice the occult covertly or had become inactive. Although Saul had removed the sin of witchcraft from the land, he did not remove it from his heart. We may make a great show of denouncing sin, but if our hearts do not change, the sins will return. Knowing what is right and condemning what is wrong do not take the place of doing what is right.

God had strictly forbidden the Israelites to have anything to do with divination, sorcery, witchcraft, mediums, fortune-tellers, or anyone who consults the dead (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). In fact, sorceresses were to be put to death (Exodus 22:18). Occult practices were carried on in the name of pagan gods, and people turned to the occult for answers that God would not give.

Practitioners of the occult have Satan and demons as the source of their information; God does not reveal his will to them. Instead, God speaks through his own channels: the Bible, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

***<sup>9</sup> But the woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?"***

***<sup>10</sup> Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this."***

***<sup>11</sup> Then the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"***

***"Bring up Samuel," he said.***

***<sup>12</sup> When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!"***

Did Samuel really come back from the dead at the medium's call? The medium was frightened at the appearance of Samuel—she knew too well that the spirits she usually contacted were either contrived or satanic. Somehow Samuel's appearance revealed to her that she was dealing with a power far greater than she had known. She did not call up Samuel by trickery or by the power of Satan; God brought Samuel back to give Saul a prediction regarding his fate, a message Saul already knew. This in no way justifies efforts to contact the dead or communicate with persons or spirits from the past. God is against all such practices (Galatians 5:19-21).

***<sup>13</sup> The king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?"***

***The woman said, "I see a ghostly figure coming up out of the earth."***

***<sup>14</sup> "What does he look like?" he asked.***

***"An old man wearing a robe is coming up," she said.***

***Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.***

***<sup>15</sup> Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"***

***"I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has departed from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do."***

God did not answer Saul's appeals because Saul had not followed God's previous directions. Sometimes we wonder why our prayers are not answered. But if we don't fulfill the responsibilities God has already given us, we should not be surprised when he does not give us further guidance.

***<sup>16</sup> Samuel said, "Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has departed from you and become your enemy? <sup>17</sup> The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. <sup>18</sup> Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today. <sup>19</sup> The LORD will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines."***

**1 Chronicles 10:13-14 (NIV)**

***<sup>13</sup> Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, <sup>14</sup> and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.***

***<sup>20</sup> Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel's words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and all that night.***

***<sup>21</sup> When the woman came to Saul and saw that he was greatly shaken, she said, "Look, your servant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands and did what you told me to do.***

***<sup>22</sup> Now please listen to your servant and let me give you some food so you may eat and have the strength to go on your way."***

***<sup>23</sup> He refused and said, "I will not eat."***

***But his men joined the woman in urging him, and he listened to them. He got up from the ground and sat on the couch.***

***<sup>24</sup> The woman had a fattened calf at the house, which she butchered at once. She took some flour, kneaded it and baked bread without yeast. <sup>25</sup> Then she set it before Saul and his men, and they ate. That same night they got up and left.***