

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 11TH, 2024 // 1 SAMUEL

GOD NO LONGER SPEAKS TO SAUL (1 SAMUEL 28:3-14) WE NEED GODLY COUNSEL

Samuel's death was mentioned earlier (25:1) and is mentioned here to show the contrast in Saul's leadership with Samuel and without him.

- With Samuel, Saul removed **those that could or claimed to be able to contact the dead or spirits** (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:9-14), but without Samuel, Saul **will turn back to that which was removed from them.**

SAUL TRUSTED IN SELF AND NOT GOD

The Philistine location shows they had entered Saul's territory and they intended to continue their assault against Saul and Israel.

- Saul rejected God and rejected His commands, but when things got tough for him, he looked for God to bail him out. **Our trust in God is shown through obedience in all things and in all times, not just when we need rescuing.**

"HE INQUIRED OF THE LORD..."

Saul hoped to hear from God through dreams, the Urim, or through the Prophets, but **God was silent.**

- God told Saul that he would be rejected as king of Israel because he had rejected the Lord, even comparing his rebellion to divination (15:23). Since God would not go back on his word, **Saul sought another avenue of communication.**

DID GOD TURN HIS BACK ON SAUL?

Saul could have confessed his sin, repented, and turned back to God and God would have turned back to him (James 4:8). Instead, **he chose to sin** by further violating God's commands.

- We can never believe the lie that we are too far gone, or it is too late to come back to God. **He is willing and faithful to forgive anyone who repents and turns back to him** (1 John 1:9).

THE WITCH OF EN-DOR

Saul wanted his men to find a medium, someone who can contact the dead, for him to seek guidance on how to handle the Philistines. They knew of **a woman at En-dor**, so **Saul disguises himself and makes the short trip.**

- Saul **swears by the Lord that she will not be punished for her actions and tells her to bring up the deceased prophet Samuel.**

CON OR CONJURING?

The medium screamed when she saw Samuel (12). **Was her surprise because it actually worked for once or was her surprise from her contact not being with a "familiar spirit," a demon?**

- This did not happen by the medium's "power" or ability but was a **unique work of God in allowing Saul to communicate with Samuel.**

SAMUEL SPEAKS (1 SAMUEL 28:15-25) "SAMUEL ASKED SAUL"

Samuel **wanted to know why he had been disturbed**, not as someone who was awakened from a slumber, but as someone pulled from a place of comfort and blessing with the burning desire to return.

- **Samuel spoke directly to Saul** and not through the medium. As a prophet, he did not need a "mouthpiece" to relay the Lord's words.

THIS WAS TRULY THE PROPHET SAMUEL

The medium and Saul recognized Samuel. It was not a deceptive demon because truth was spoken. Samuel was not in a "soul sleep" or suspended state waiting to "cross over," but was with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).

- This is all possible in the same way that **Moses and Elijah were seen by two disciples with Jesus at the Transfiguration** (Matthew 17:3).

GOD IS CONSISTENT

Saul wanted an answer from Samuel on what he should do, but **the prophet only confirmed what God had already spoken** 15 years earlier.

- Samuel reminded Saul of his words (Ch. 15), where he told Saul that **"the Lord has torn the kingship of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor...for He is not a man who changes his mind"** (15:28-29).

DOES GOD CHANGE HIS MIND?

It is possible that Saul believed God would have relented and changed His mind about removing him as king.

- All through Scripture, we see God warn people about judgment that awaits on the path they are on. **The only thing that may "change God's mind" is repentance and genuine brokenness and never time.**

SAUL IS TOLD ABOUT HIS FATE

Samuel told Saul that tomorrow **Israel's army would be handed over to the Philistines and Saul and his sons would die.**

- Saul collapsed onto the floor at the news of his judgment. Then the medium and Saul, two people living in rebellion to God, shared a meal. Afterward, **Saul and his men left that night with the weight of what tomorrow brought.**

READY TO FIGHT (1 SAMUEL 29:1-11) GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN ABOUT DAVID

The Philistine army is preparing further attacks on Israel, and the Philistine leaders notice David and his men getting into battle formations. They ask Achish, **"What are these Hebrews doing here? Isn't this the David they sing about...?"**

- David had slid to this place because he had forgotten who he really was, but **God would use this pagan king to remind him.**

WHAT BETTER WAY IS THERE TO GAIN FAVOR...

When the Philistine leaders worried that David could turn on them in battle, David pleads his case, asking, **"What have you found against your servant to keep me from going to fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"**

- Many want to believe David was referring to Saul in v.8, but we do not see that considering **God had to intervene.**

THE PAGAN KING DEFENDS DAVID

Achish came to David's defense, confidently claiming that David had been with him the last 16 months and **he is not the Hebrew they think he is.**

- **Are there people around us who could also confidently say we are not a Christian because they have seen how we live?**

A FOOT IN BOTH WORLDS

David left Israel hoping to find peace among the Philistines, but now they won't accept him either.

- The words of the Philistine leaders should have served as a wake-up call to David, but it was going to take much more dramatic crisis to shake David. **God is working to bring David back to where he should be.**

BEING ACCEPTED

- David slid to a place where he was accepted by the pagan king of Gath. **Whose approval and acceptance are we seeking? Are we trying to please people or God (Galatians 1:10; Colossians 3:23)?**
- When we serve Christ in what matters, we are acceptable to God and approved by others (**Romans 14:18**).

ARE WE SETTLING FOR SUBSTITUTES?

- **Are we accepting substitutes in speaking to God?** We do not get to choose the mode in which we speak to God.
- Nature and creation testify to a creator (**Rom. 1:20**), **but being among creation is not a substitute for communicating with the Creator through consistent prayer and reading the Word.**
- God told us to gather together (**Hebrews 10:25**), so we do not accept a substitute for gathering in the way He intended.
- **Acts 2 shows the early church meeting throughout the week in homes and then gathering in the temple to praise, study, and break bread. We must make Life Groups and attendance a priority.**