

1 Samuel 28:6

⁶ And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

1 Samuel 28:15–19

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.”

¹⁶ Then Samuel said: “So why 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. 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.”

Alone **1 Samuel 28:3-25**

INTRO:

What is the worst thing that could ever happen to us? David, the man after God’s own heart, was in a nerve racking place, trapped among the Philistine armies and there was no human way out of his predicament. Before the writer will tell us how God delivered David, he interrupts his story to take us into the near future to show us King Saul in a far worse situation. Saul described in his own words. ***“God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore.”*** As we enter the story in **1 Samuel 28:3-25** we find Saul beside himself in desperation.

I. The Important Setting of the Scene (v. 1-6)

II. Saul and the Witch of En-Dor (v. 7-14)

III. Samuel's Word for Saul (v. 15-19)

I. The Important Setting of the Scene (v. 1-6)

A. Before the writer gave the record of what happened to Saul, he has to give us details we could know no other way so we can understand.

1 Samuel 28:3-6 *“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.”*

B. He supplied three important details. First, Samuel is dead. We were told this in **1 Samuel 25**, but to grasp the events that follow we must remember this point. Second, the Philistines are attacking and Saul is terrified. Was this different from before? Maybe, maybe not, we are not told. Only that this time Saul has a terrible foreboding. Third, Saul was abandoned by God. Yahweh authorized three ways Saul could use to get direction from the Lord, dreams, Urim, and prophets. When Saul called, God did not answer. Yahweh left Saul alone.

C. Saul was in the most terrifying circumstance anyone could experience. The Lord did something to Saul He will never do to us if we are His children. God forsook Saul.

II. Saul and the Witch of En-Dor (v.7-14)

1 Samuel 28:9-11 *“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.’”*

A. A terrified King Saul did the unthinkable. He consulted a necromancer. In obedience to God's Law, Saul banned these folks from the land. God's people were to follow God not magic. People thought, magic was a way to force God do what they wanted Him to do. Notice the deep irony of what Saul said to reassure the woman.

“And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, ‘As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.’”

B. Saul did not want God, he just wanted God's direction. This is why he was using a method God specifically condemned in the Law to seek to have that direction. So Saul asks that Samuel be brought up from the dead.

III. Samuel's Word for Saul (v. 15-19)

1 Samuel 28:13-19 *“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 so 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.”*

A. Samuel did indeed speak. This is clear because the words include events the witch would not know about. The mantle was probably the same cloak Saul tore in **1 Samuel 15**.

B. Samuel reiterated what the LORD said to Saul when he refused to obey and destroy all the Amalekites. God tore the kingdom from Saul and gave it to David, the man after His own heart. This was to be the action David foretold in **1 Samuel 26**. God was about to remove King Saul and all his sons.

C. Twice, in the words of Saul and in the words of Samuel, the great terrible sentence from God is stated. Because Saul despised God's word, it was forever taken from him.

What Lessons Do We Take From This?

1. If we are not interested in hearing God and using our spiritual privileges, we may lose them.

Amos 8:11-12 *“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. 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.”

We must work on being sensitive to the Word of God. We do this, after salvation, by submitting to the Holy Spirit in our lives. Sometimes it may seem like the Lord has abandoned us. If you know the Lord as Savior, He has not. He promised He never will. We must not turn to other means but to the Lord Himself and seek to have Him openly work in us again.

2. We must not approach Christianity as magic. We cannot twist the arm of the Almighty or think that we can make Him indebted to us.

3. We must be thankful Jesus endured this kind of suffering for us. He was abandoned by His heavenly Father so we may be accepted in Him. On the cross He cried out, ***“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”*** (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34) God, the Father turned His back on Him when ***“He (God the Father) made Him (God the Son) who knew no sin, sin for us, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*** (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Elizabeth Barret Browning wrote in the end of a poem entitled ***“Cowper’s Grave”***:

***Yea, once, Immanuel’s orphaned cry His universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echoless, “My God, I am forsaken!”
It went up from the Holy’s lips amid His lost creation,
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!***

Hymn #511 *Now I Belong To Jesus*