

A Walk On the Dark Side

1 Samuel 28:3,6,7

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 3-18-2012

Introduction

I want to begin by reading you a story that you may have a hard time believing, but this kind of story could be multiplied hundreds of times from extremely reliable sources. And as I read this, I want you to realize that not all mediums act in exactly this manner. But there is usually some kind of supernatural phenomenon that accompanies a medium who really is dealing with the demonic. This particular example took place in Tibet in 1993.

Stephen Hishey said,

Moments after our arrival, this medium became possessed by various spirits, including house gods, that were being invoked by the lama. As the demons settled into his body, we watched in amazement as he plucked a live coal out of the fire and placed it into his mouth. There was a sickening hissing sound as the red-hot ember came in contact with the moist tissue.

As he chewed on the live coal, the monk suddenly levitated six feet into the air. Still seated in a cross-legged posture, he began to fly in a circular pattern just over the heads of the crowd. As he moved about the room, the people bowed in awe, crying, 'God, god, god.' This lasted for about two minutes before my wife and I, unable to tolerate this perversion any longer, began to invoke the name of Jesus...

The oracle dropped to the floor! After a few moments, the lama asked the medium to explain his sudden and unflattering reintroduction to the law of gravity. As he surveyed the room, the monk's gaze came to rest on my wife and me, standing near the doorway. Pointing a finger in our direction, he exclaimed, 'These are the people.' It was clear to me that this knowledge had been given him by a supernatural power.

At this point the lama came over and stood directly in front of us. With his hands clasped together, he bowed politely. This was not an act of reverence, mind you, but a gesture beseeching us to go away. And we did.

Westerners have a hard time believing that this sort of thing can be real. And I will admit that magicians and scientists have been able to debunk *some* examples of the occult as being hoaxes. They have shown how these mediums were fakes who were simply using magician techniques, illusion, ventriloquism, and other tricks to pretend that something was going on. But there are many others that they have not been able to debunk. In fact, there are so many occult practitioners who have demonstrated weird supernatural powers, that a whole branch of science, called paranormal science, has

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arisen since the early 1900's. The scientists have not been able to explain away the supernatural, so they have started to study this unseen power. They are convinced that it does exist, so now they are trying to use scientific processes to study it and tap into it. And some of these scientists have become demonized themselves. It's scary stuff.

And I am here to tell you this morning that the realm of the occult is real, and it is dangerous, and one of the biggest dangers is assuming that all occultists are simply fakes. It is precisely because demonic power is so real that Americans are embracing the occult in record numbers. Children are being taught occult rituals as early as kindergarten - rituals such as channeling, visualization, and other New Age techniques. And once they experience the supernatural, they keep coming back for more until they are in such bondage, that they cannot escape. These are not innocent relaxation techniques. These are techniques that invite what they call "spirit guides" into their lives. And pastors have to deal with the demonic in very young children. It's sad. I have had to help believers be freed from demons that they received from one visit to a Palm Reader or from messing around one time with a Ouija Board.

Let me try to give you a little picture of how pervasive this has become in America. From the time of Abraham Lincoln and forward there have even been a number of presidents who have at least dabbled in the occult. And actually, in some of these president's lives, it was their wives. Abraham Lincoln's wife used mediums to try to speak to their dead son. Reagan's wife was involved. When Bill Clinton was in office, his wife invited New Age guru Jean Houston to preside over guided visualization sessions in the White House. You can see a picture there of another occasion when she was blessed by an Indian Shaman. And through the influence of such famous people, and through the arts, education, music, and even business, millions of Americans have been introduced to the occult in my generation. Several authors have estimated that over 50 million Americans are actively involved in the occult. Just look at the number of occult books in the Omaha bookstores, and the number of stores dedicated to the occult in this city, and you know that we have a problem.

I. **Saul's walk with the occult started much earlier (v. 3 with chapters 13,15)**

A. Saul's downward slide started when he ignored inspired revelation (chapters 13,15) and God said, "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (15:23).

But what a lot of people don't realize is that the occult doesn't usually start with overt demonic activity. It almost always starts with something much more tame. And this was certainly the case with Saul. His walk with the dark side started all the way back in chapter 15, if not earlier. And it is hinted at in this chapter.

Verse 3 says, "**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.**" We saw last week that Saul got rid of the occult early in his reign while he was still a good king. And therefore Saul's slip into the dark paths of the demonic did not start by visiting the occult. He didn't have opportunity for that. Turn to 1Samuel 15:22-23.

1Samuel 15:22 So Samuel said:

**"Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.**

1Samuel 15:23 For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft,
And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
He also has rejected you from *being* king."

Commentators point out that the word "as" is in italics here. It's not in the Hebrew. The Hebrew literally says, "rebellion *is* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is* iniquity and idolatry." In fact, it is at the very heart and root of the occult. You cannot separate the two. And the Hebrew word for witchcraft is actually a general word for the occult. Witchcraft is a bad translation. The same word used here, is used by Saul in our chapter when he asks the medium in En Dor to do a séance, or as the ESV words it, "divine for me by a spirit." It's hard to translate. You could translate it, engage in the occult. So 1 Samuel 15:23 says that Saul's first step into the world of the occult was to engage in rebellion and stubbornness.

Numerous experts in the occult have said that this is almost always the first downward step into the occult – a deliberate violation of God's Word,

and stubbornly refusing to repent. That's what gave Satan legal ground in Saul's life. In fact, if you read the occult literature (which I don't recommend – it really is dangerous, and has caused Christians to begin to be demonized – but if you read the occult literature, which I have), you find them prescribing various acts of rebellion. And one work said that the more you rebel, the more power you receive from the spirits. And that is what the occult is about. It is trying to gain power, or to gain information that will *give* them power. But that verse in 1 Samuel 15 should warn us that we cannot ignore rebellion or stubbornness in our children. If it is not put under the blood of Christ, and dealt with, it will open that child up to demonic influence. I have seen it too many times. So that was step one.

B. That rebellion opened Saul to demonization (16:14ff)

If you flip forward one chapter to 1 Samuel 16 you will see step two. You will see that when Saul did not repent of his rebellion and stubbornness, he grieved the Holy Spirit (so he no longer had the Holy Spirit's protection) and he gave legal ground for a demonic spirit to regularly demonize him. 1 Samuel 16:14 says, "**But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit** [and we saw before that the literal Hebrew is an "evil spirit" – it was a demon – "an evil spirit"] **from the LORD troubled him.**" God allowed this demon to afflict Saul as an act of discipline. Saul could have repented at any time and had the power to resist this demon. But because of his rebellion, he had no power. And interestingly, his fear of losing power by stepping down from the throne kept him from having the Holy Spirit's power. So there is true power and counterfeit power. Repentance and faith is the only thing that enables us to keep walking in the power of the Holy Spirit as David did. David realized this when Satan tempted him to number Israel. He realized it in the Bathsheba event. When the Spirit of God left David after the Bathsheba event, he began a downward slippery slide as well. But what restored it all? Repentance from sin and faith in Christ. It's so simple. And yet, apart from God's grace it is so hard. Our hearts don't want to relinquish the very thing that keeps us in bondage.

C. Demons can be very religious (v. 6,10 with 17:37; 19:6; 23:7,21)

And part of what made it so hard for Saul to recognize what was happening to him was that this demon appears to have been what experts call a religious demon. There are some demons that are so dark that they drive you away from church and seem to make people ill when they get near a church. But religious demons don't do that. Take a look at point C. Point C lists some examples of how this demon didn't always manifest itself as

being so evil. Many American mediums and spiritists give every illusion of being Christians, and they pray to God, and have religious language. It's not like they are self-conscious Satan-worshippers. The verses I have given show that Saul worshipped God, blessed people in the name of the Yahweh, and was very religious. There is no reason why a person with this kind of demon could not be in this congregation right now. Religious demons have no problem being around worshippers, using God's name, and looking spiritual – so long as people don't probe into their lives and expose the demonic rebellion and stubbornness. That's where they get upset. In chapter 23:7 the demon was moving Saul to kill David, and right in the act of moving Saul to murder David, Saul is thinking, "**God has delivered him into my hand.**" The narrator tells us that Saul really thought that God had blessed him and had delivered David into his hands. So those who are demonized can think they are being sincere. Why would he think something like that when we know he was opposing God? It's because it is a religious demon.

Look at the religious hypocrisy of Saul in 1 Samuel 28, verses 6 and 10. Verse 6 says,

1Samuel 28:6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

This demon who was driving Saul did not seem to have any problem with Saul praying, and asking for the Urim, and trying to see if there was a prophet that he could go to. Those things were no threat for this demon. And actually, it was a blessing that God did not allow the demon to give Saul the illusion of having heard from God, because the harsh reality exposed what was really happening, and may have opened Saul up to repentance before he died. And we will look at that on a future Sunday, Lord willing. God does eventually bring his children to repentance. But look at verse 10:

1Samuel 28:10 And Saul swore to her by the LORD [all capital letters means YAHWEH. "Saul swore to her by Yahweh], saying, "**As the LORD [Yahweh] lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.**"

Now isn't that odd? He swears before Yahweh that he will not hurt her, while asking her to do a séance (which is rebellion against Yahweh). And she seems to accept his vow before Yahweh. It seems incongruous to us, but it didn't seem the incongruous to either of them. But this is so typical of the deception of religious spirits. Down through American history, most mediums have actually claimed to believe in God, and have had no problem praying to Jesus, and asking for God's blessing upon their séance, and

talking about God doing their work for them. They have been very religious. In fact, the demons drive them to be very religious.

But they are not the only kind of religious demon. While we are talking about religious demons we might as well list some of their other influences that can happen *within* the church. There is first of all the person who has the counterfeit gift of discernment. He is constantly sensing sins in other people's lives, or errors in their judgment, or is manipulating them in the direction that they should go ("I sense from the Lord that you should do such and such.'). Always get nervous when people constantly know God's will for you. It's probably a religious demon that is guiding them. Now I believe in personal guidance, but I don't believe in individuals guiding others in ways that go beyond the Scripture. God's Spirit doesn't say "I want the church to do such and such" today. That would be normative. Once the Scriptures were given, they are the only normative revelation. So if someone tells you, "God has revealed to me that you should marry me and you will be in disobedience if you don't," your response should be, "I will take that under advisement, and if you meet the Biblical qualifications and God guides me, I'll get back to you." People with this false spirit of discernment might have dreams about wrongs (perhaps sexual sins) that others have done, and it poisons them toward that person. This is a spirit that masquerades as God's Holy Spirit giving guidance, but in reality it doesn't build up; it tears down, divides, and it brings all kinds of other negative attitudes toward people. And yet the whole time that it is working, it is quite comfortable operating within the church. And people like Derek Prince who have sought to cast out such religious spirits have found them incredibly resistant. They are very difficult to deal with. So the first kind of religious spirit is the counterfeit spirit of discernment.

Then there is the spirit of Jezebel that manifests itself through manipulation and control. When you see a church that has caucuses (or groups of people) that meet mainly to complain about issues in the church, you probably have a spirit of Jezebel present. Experts have found that deeply wounded people are especially susceptible to this kind of religious spirit. This spirit will often undermine the ministry of the word, and undermine leadership, and gossip and pray about church problems, and have bitterness over issues. And according to the experts, it is pervasive in American churches. It's one of the greatest reasons for church splits – splits over anything. Some of the things that churches split over are irrational. They don't make any sense – unless you realize that there were religious demons at work.

Then there is the spirit of self-righteousness. And many times these religious spirits will cause people to spar (if not verbally, at least mentally), with one religious spirit undermining, and another religious spirit causing the person being undermined to respond with self-righteous defense and perhaps even attacks. It is so clever.

One manifestation of this spirit is to give a pastor (or even somebody else) a martyr complex. I have looked on in amazement at one pastor who deliberately does things to try to get people mad at him. He sabotages his own ministry. It's like he isn't comfortable unless people are upset with him over something. It's amazing. His whole ministry is surrounded by controversy, and every year he's got to drive somebody out of the church. He doesn't seem to ever feel good about himself unless he is being "persecuted" or "martyred" for something.

There are so many religious spirits. And every one of them feels perfectly comfortable within the church. Like Saul, people who are influenced by these spirits can think that they are serving God.

D. Yet those who rebel against God's infallible revelation, hope they can hear something less clear (v. 6) and are even open to alternative forms of guidance (v. 7; see Deut. 18 for the connection between all occult manifestations (vv. 9-14) and professing believers who claim to be prophets but are not (vv. 20-22)

In fact, point D shows that Deuteronomy 18 connects all of the various forms of occult together with false prophecy. And the false prophets definitely have a religious spirit because they are convinced that they are serving God with their prophecies. Matthew 7 says that even on judgment day some of them will be puzzled that God was against them. Haven't we prophesied in your name? And Jesus will say, "I never knew you." Of course, as I have already intimated, not all who are afflicted with a religious spirit are unregenerate. These spirits can afflict both.

So how do you test if you are being plagued by a religious spirit like Saul was? I have a much longer handout with detailed diagnostics and prayers of renunciation. But for now, let me read 2 Timothy 3:1-5, which gives 19 telltale signs of this spirit. No one of them is an indicator (because our flesh can produce this as well), but when you have them grouped together, something suspicious is going on. Paul describes people within the church who are professing believers during the last days of the Old Covenant:

2Timothy 3:1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:
2Timothy 3:2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
2Timothy 3:3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,
2Timothy 3:4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

And then comes his summary description of this religious spirit:

2Timothy 3:5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

Saul had a form of godliness. He religiously attended all the new moon feasts, and criticized David when David did not. He gave every appearance of being a Christian. And I am one of those who is at least open to the idea that he may indeed have been saved. We will never know for sure. In one of the early sermons, I gave several proofs that people use that show that he was regenerate, including the statement in chapter 10, verse 9 that God gave Saul a new heart. That sounds like regeneration. And even in this chapter, Samuel is going to say that Saul and his sons will be with him in Sheol. Of course, it doesn't say which department of Sheol. Is it lower Sheol or upper Sheol? But there are some indications that he may have been regenerate. We don't know for sure. But whether or not that is true, I have already given Scriptures that show that even professing believers can be influenced by and even destroyed by the occult. So if you find yourself in any of the steps under point number I, renounce Satan's works, claim the cleansing of the blood of Christ, take away all legal ground from him, and renew yourself in God's grace. And do it out loud, because silent resistance doesn't seem to work. Satan is not an enemy that you want to mess with.

II. How serious is dabbling with the occult? (vv. 3b,9-10)

A. The law gave the death penalty for anyone who even remotely dabbled with the occult (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:6,27; Deut. 18:9-14)

Which brings us to Roman numeral II – how serious is dabbling with the occult? Unfortunately, some Christians don't treat it seriously at all. They will read their horoscopes every day in the newspaper, have no problem getting their fortune told at a faire, or will dabble in other things - just out of curiosity. At a church that I went to when I was a teenager, the young people's group was goofing around with some paranormal things that one person had read. And they claimed it was just tapping into our own physical powers. So, for example, some of the young people would do the incantations while pressing down upon a person's head, and after some time

of doing that, you were supposed to put one finger under each armpit and lift the person off the floor. Everybody said that it just seemed effortless. They thought that this was just a way of releasing strength that you didn't know that you had – *until* one of the young people stayed floating in the air when they removed their fingers. That freaked everybody out. All of a sudden they realized that this was demonic. That was right inside of a fundamentalist church basement. We cannot fool around with the occult.

And let me say that by occult I mean anything from Satan worship (which is the most extreme) to horoscopes. It would include going to séances, necromancy, and any other attempts at communicating with the dead. It would include ESP, PSI (which is actually pronounced “sigh”), and all forms of supra-natural psychic experimentation. It would include real magic (as opposed to sleight-of-hand magic). It would include fortune telling, wearing charms, carrying a lucky rabbit's foot, using a Ouija board, astrology, casting spells on people, and buying love potions. That's all occult.

How seriously should we take these things? Well, 1 Samuel 28:3 says that under Samuel's godly influence, all occult practitioners were either kicked out of Israel or were put to death – the Hebrew is ambiguous. But they were not allowed to remain in Israel. And look at the complaint of the woman in verse 9: **“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?”** She certainly was fearful of being killed. So it appears that either the death penalty was applied or they were kicked out of the land and they were threatened with the death penalty if they ever came back. And this is totally consistent with God's law – even with the flexibility of penalties within God's law. Let me read the Scriptures that I put into your outline.

Exodus 22:18 “You shall not permit a sorceress to live.

I would say that's taking sorcery pretty seriously.

Leviticus 20:6 “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.

Leviticus 20:27 “A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood *shall be* upon them.’ ”

Deuteronomy 18:9 “When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.

Deuteronomy 18:10 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,

Deuteronomy 18:11 or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

Deuteronomy 18:12 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 18:13 You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 18:14 For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.

One standard by which you can weigh the seriousness of any sin is by whether a death penalty was connected to it. If any of you children are tempted to curse your parents or strike them, read what Jesus said about that in Matthew 15. It's pretty serious. We will see in a bit that such rebellion is connected with the occult. And of course we are talking about the state doing this after a fair trial, two or three witnesses, and all the other protections of the law. We are not talking about individuals taking matters into their own hands. And of course, I believe it was a maximum penalty, and when there was repentance, there could be forgiveness – all of those caveats. But God says that the occult in all of its dimensions is so dangerous, that it *deserves* the death penalty. We have to at least say that. He calls it an abomination. So I would say that God's law treats the occult very, very seriously. And we should too. It is dangerous.

B. Kings were judged by how they dealt with these spiritists (2 Kings 21:6; 23:24; 2 Chron 33:6).

And I won't go into it, but I've given Scriptures that show how kings were judged as being either good kings or bad kings based on whether or not they got rid of mediums, and other practitioners of the occult. Apparently it was a federal crime, not just a local crime. So that makes it even more serious. Even kings were responsible to get rid of it. So on that level it is less libertarian than most crimes were. Most crimes were only dealt with at the city or county level. Again, it shows the seriousness.

C. God destroyed Saul for two things: unfaithfulness and consulting a medium (1Chron. 10:13; cf. Lev. 20:6)

And 1 Chronicles 10:13 sums up why God destroyed Saul in the battle of the next chapter. He sums it up with two things. Let me read that verse:

1Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance.

That sums it up – his rebellion, and his going to a medium.

D. People are actually defiled by them (Lev. 19:31)

The last danger that I list in your outlines is that people are actually defiled when they go to such people. It doesn't matter whether you are going simply out of curiosity, you can be defiled. Leviticus 19:31 says,

Leviticus 19:31 “Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits [you are not even supposed to listen to them]; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

If you take that literally, you shouldn't even read or pay attention to the horoscope. God's people *can* be defiled by the occult. And I could give you many stories of friends who had weird demonic things happening to them when they started getting too curious. I could also give you hundreds of stories documented in books where Christians started to be afflicted by the demonic after they messed around with some occult game, symbol, book, or meeting. It can happen. Now if we guard ourselves, 1John says that we don't have to worry.

III. A séance at night (v. 8) – Is it simply a hoax?

A. While some séances might be simply hoaxes that use sleight of hand, illusion, ventriloquism, etc., the Bible assumes that this is often the work of demons, not actual communication with the dead.

But I want to finish up this section by answering the question: “Was this woman a fake?” What was going on in this chapter? Did Samuel really appear? Or did Saul just *think* that he appeared? I've met Christians who have argued that this can't possibly be Samuel. It had to have been an illusion. But the narrator says it was. Verse 15 doesn't say that Saul *thought* Samuel was talking to him. It says by inspiration, “**Now Samuel said to Saul...**” And this has been confusing to people. Some have used this chapter to justify going to séances. They say, “It actually works, and Saul had just been a meanie earlier in getting rid of them.” They say that this is God's correction of Saul, and God's endorsement of mediums. Others have said, “No, the whole thing is always an illusion.” The truth is somewhere in between those two statements.

So the first thing that is important to understand is that there *are* people who involve themselves in so-called occult activities who aren't

using demonic power. They are just clever guessers who give information to the client that *seems* remarkable, but really isn't. Just to illustrate this - when I was in College, I had a psychology professor who gave us a personality profile test, and the next week gave us the results of this personality diagnosis. And I'm a fast reader, so I am looking around the room, and I can see visible shock coming into people's faces as they are reading down through the paper. They think that the professor has somehow been able to figure out all their deep dark secrets. A couple of the people were visibly blushing. He seemed to know everything about them. He knew their sins; he knew their thoughts. And after the results of the survey had been read and settled in, the professor explained that everyone had been given back the exact same piece of paper. He said, "I didn't do *any* analysis of you. These results are just the types of things that are common to most people, and these are what shysters use. They wow their clients with their 'supernatural' insight." He said, "There is nothing to it."

And so, I'll be the first to admit that a lot of what happens in occult circles is not supernatural at all, though of course, they are playing with danger by giving Satan legal ground in their lives. Some people use magicians tricks, others use ventriloquism to make it sound like a voice is in the room, and will use sleight of hand and illusion to make it look like a spirit is appearing. And there are a lot of books out there that have debunked this stuff. I've got a couple on my shelf. Here's the point - don't believe every story of occult happenings. You will look foolish if you do.

But having admitted that, the fact of the matter is that you cannot read the Biblical passages on the occult and not see that there really is demonic at work in at least some of them. And God would banish anyone who even pretends to be contacting the spirits of the dead because of how serious the whole situation is. The occult is that dangerous. And Scripture would portray mediums as normally being people who are possessed by a demon. They are not contacting the dead; they are contacting a demon who impersonates the dead. Let me give you a couple of Scripture examples. Leviticus 20:27 speaks of a medium "**who has familiar spirits**" – not "who claims to have," but "who has familiar spirits." In Acts 16:26, Luke says, "**a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us.**" She really was possessed. And you can look at many other Scriptures and see that the occult is real – it is real demons who are really dangerous.

B. Though séances never really communicate with the dead, in this particular situation God did a miracle by bringing Samuel forward

1. Before she could even go through her rituals, Samuel appeared.

But I want to quickly show how even though mediums like this woman at En Dor do indeed dabble with the supernatural (with demons) that they *cannot* bring up the dead, and that what happened with Samuel here was a miracle performed by God; it was not something that she did. Not at all. Look at verses 11-12:

**1Samuel 28:11 Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?”
And he said, “Bring up Samuel for me.”**

**1Samuel 28:12 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!”**

Beyond the *claim* by mediums to be able to bring up the dead (and she definitely *claimed* that she could do that), there are three things that commentators have deduced from those two verses. First, commentators point out that Samuel appeared before she had any time to go through her normal occult rituals.¹ And that is very significant. A medium will always go through prolonged rituals that invite demons to possess her. Usually she goes unconscious, and the demons will speak through her. And it is significant that this woman is not unconscious. And there are various ways that the demons speak through the woman or speak outside the woman. Isaiah 8:19 speaks of mediums who chirp and mutter by demonic power. Sometimes the muttering comes from their throats. But often an odd voice will come out of their stomach, or even up from the ground. For example, Isaiah 29:4 says,

**Isaiah 29:4 You shall be brought down,
You shall speak out of the ground;
Your speech shall be low, out of the dust;
Your voice shall be like a medium’s, out of the ground;
And your speech shall whisper out of the dust.**

And sometimes it is freaky – it can be a deep male voice coming out of a woman’s body, and it can come from behind the client’s head, or be right in front of him, or come out of the ground. Sometimes a pen will lift up

¹ Several commentators make this point. Ralph Klein says, “No ritual is recounted. Perhaps, as Beuken suggests, Samuel beats the woman at her own game by coming up as a prophet of the living God before she could conjure up a dead ghost.” David Tsumura says, “This was certainly an extraordinary even for her. It may be that the ordinary divining powers were not employed at this time. Or, rather a power stronger than her divining powers might have been at work in bringing up the spirit of Samuel.”

from the table and start writing with no hand attached to it. Sometimes there is a visible manifestation of a light or a shape – a shape like a person sometimes, and that shape will speak, or move objects, or write. And my point in bringing all of this up is that there is always a ritual that a medium will go through in order to summon the demon who impersonates the dead. It's the *medium* inviting the person up.

But, in this passage, Samuel appeared before she could even go through her ritual. That is the first clue that it wasn't she who brought Samuel up. It was God who answered Saul's wish the moment Saul made it. In fact, Samuel himself credits Saul with bringing him up in verse 15, not the medium. Usually the medium gets credit. But God must have told Samuel that Saul wanted to talk to him, and when Samuel comes up, he doesn't talk to the woman. He doesn't give her the time of day. Samuel addresses Saul alone – very unusual. But my main point is that before the woman could even try to summon a demon, Samuel comes. That's the first clue.

2. She screamed in fright, indicating that this was not expected.

Second, she screamed in fright. This was not the demon that she was used to working with. This was something totally unexpected and something that she did not do. As one commentator said, "Something ... happened outside her control..." The Geneva Study Bible says, "It is clear from the medium's reaction that she could not compel him [Samuel] to appear." And so her scream is the second clue that this was not the normal work of a medium, but was God *actually circumventing her work*. That means He was not condoning the work of a medium or even answering the work of the medium. God was doing something unusual – something that totally surprised the medium.

3. Her response to Saul indicates that she realized that when the real thing happened, her client must have been the king. Samuel seems to bypass her on every level.

Third, her response to Saul seems to indicate that the appearance of Samuel coincided with Saul's request to bring up Samuel and that this coincidence made her immediately realize that she was dealing with king Saul. So all of those things happened at the same moment.

Saul promised her that she wouldn't get in trouble, and urged her to continue. He asked, "**What do you see?**" And she responded, "**I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth.**" At first, Saul couldn't see Samuel

(perhaps because at first Samuel was still down in that deep pit that medium's often dug, and he was not as close to the pit as she was to be able to see him). But in verses 15 and following Saul does appear to see him, or at a minimum to hear Samuel's words and to be able to dialogue with him. So Samuel completely bypassed the medium on every level. So I've dealt with the one error.

4. The writer says that Saul “perceived” correctly “that it was Samuel” (v. 14) and continues to indicate that Samuel had come up (vv. 15ff).

But the other error is to say that this wasn't Samuel. Commentators point out that Samuel *is indeed* talking directly to Saul. We can't miss that point. The second part of verse 14 says, **“And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down.”** He perceived correctly that it was Samuel, and then the narrator goes on to say in the following verses that this was not an illusion. It actually was Samuel who came up. One commentator said, “It should be noted that Samuel's ‘coming up from the underworld’ is ‘presented as an actual event, not a dream or a vision...’” And Lord willing, next week we will look in more detail at why Samuel comes up from Sheol rather than coming down from heaven. In the Old Testament the saints went to Sheol, not directly to heaven.

5. However, other Scriptures indicate that there was a reason for the medium's surprise – only God by a miracle can bring the spirits of dead men back to men (Ezek. 26:20-21; 32:18-32; Jonah 2:6; Luke 16:26; Eph. 4:8-10; 2Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 9:2).

And I have given a number of Scriptures under point 5 that prove that people cannot travel in and out of Sheol. Ezekiel 26 says that even if people seek to make contact with the dead (that would be mediums), they can **“never be found again.”** This means that apart from a miracle from God, mediums never deal with the souls of dead people; they only deal with deceptive demons.

And let me just explain something here. Where the Old Testament Hebrew used the word Sheol to describe the place of the dead in the heart of the earth, the New Testament Greek uses the term Hades to describe exactly the same place. One is Hebrew and the other is Greek. Lower Sheol or Lower Hades was a place of fire and torment and upper Sheol or upper Hades was where paradise was. You see, heaven hadn't even been prepared for the saints yet. In John 14 Jesus told His disciples, **“I go to prepare a**

place for you.” It hadn’t been prepared yet. And at the time of Christ’s resurrection, His own soul came up from Hades (the New Testament is quite clear on that), and he emptied that place and took all of the saints to heaven. So that is the short version of a little bit of what we will look at next week, Lord willing.

But this place called Sheol or Hades has gates and bars on it. Revelation says that anyone in Hades can’t get out without God letting them out. And for that matter, no one can travel from upper Hades where paradise was to lower Hades or back again. In fact, why don’t I go ahead and read from Luke 16. I will start reading at verse 23. Speaking of the unbelieving rich man, Jesus says,

Luke 16:23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

So the rich man was in lower Hades. And Lazarus was in upper Hades. He was in paradise. They could see each other, so it’s the same place, but they were separated by a great gulf. Verse 24:

Luke 16:24 “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

Luke 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

There is no escaping from those two places apart from a miracle. But the rich man asks for a miracle, because he knows that *God* can do it. He knows his Old Testament stories. Verse 27:

Luke 16:27 “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house,

Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’

Luke 16:29 Abraham said to him, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’

Luke 16:30 And he said, “No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

Luke 16:31 But he said to him, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”

What he is describing here is a miracle. It would be a miracle for any soul to come out of the underworld. When the souls of Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in Luke 9, it was treated as an amazing miracle. When Samuel came up from the dead, it was a miracle. And certainly no medium (who is an enemy of God) had any power to help people escape. Ezekiel 26:20-21 makes it quite clear that once you are there, even when people seek your soul, they can never find you. Jonah 2:6 says that once the gates of Sheol close behind you, you are stuck. Even for believers, it was a place of

captivity according to Paul in Ephesians 4. 2 Peter indicates that they are stuck there till judgment day. And I bring all of that up just as ammo against those who think that mediums really can speak to the dead. They cannot. They are deceivers who are simply using demons.

Conclusion – God calls us not to play around with anything occult, and the story of Saul is a classic story of the negative impact that the demonic can have upon one’s life.

We've covered a ton of material, so I want to kind of summarize what we have learned. We have learned that mediums have no power to bring up the dead. In fact, Revelation 9 says that even demons can't escape from Hades unless God looses them. This is one of the reasons why demons resist so strongly when Jesus or anyone tries to bind them and send them to the pit. They beg not to go there. They don't want to go there, because they will be bound. And Scripture indicates that Satan's kingdom is progressively being more and more bound to the pit, and there is coming a day when every demon and Satan himself will be bound in the pit. But apart from a miracle from God, no one can come back from that place.

But the corollary to that point is that this means that all mediums are either fakes who pretend that they are talking with live beings (and there are some fakes) or they are really dealing with the demonic. And either way, you don't want to fool with them. When you do, you expose yourself to continuing demonic activity in your life. If you have ever meddled in the occult, I strongly urge you to verbally renounce those things, put them under the blood of Christ, and ask God to remove the demon's legal ground to mess with you. And I've got documents that can help you to do that.

The third lesson that I see is that even believers can be demonized and end up in blindness and bondage. And it can start slowly with rebellion that is not repented of, and stubbornness that is not relinquished. Those two sins must be resisted with the utmost seriousness because they open the door to demonic bondage or show that it is already there.

The fourth lesson that we have learned is that there is such a thing as religious demons who don't seem to have any problem with being in a church. Through the history of this church, I have sensed demons doing everything they could to divide our congregation. And almost every pastor friend that I have talked to about this subject has said that the same thing is true in their churches. Demons are always trying to do what they can to neutralize the effectiveness of churches. And we need to be aware of it, and we need to resist it in prayer, and resist it by not accommodating the

destructive suggestions and speech of those who are moved by these demons.

I talked with somebody a few years ago who had totally been poisoned toward someone in the congregation, and when I started digging to see why, it was because she had a dream about that person. No other evidence; just a nightmare. And even though the dream was entirely false (and was provably false), it so poisoned her emotionally to the individual that she didn't want to have anything to do with him. And it was not until she recognized the demonic in the dream, renounced it out loud, and began praying against the demonic that she was released from these bad thoughts. And then she began to wonder, "Why did I even think that in the first place? It was crazy." There are so many clever ways that Satan can come in to a church and divide and conquer. And the more that we are aware of the strategies of such spirits, and the more we are aware of the symptoms of their work, the better able we will be to pray against their influence and to have peace. Paul said, we are not ignorant of Satan's schemes. May that be true of all of us.

The last lesson is that Satan is always trying to get Christians to be more interested in other forms of revelation than the Scripture. Saul wasn't interested in the Bible, but he was interested in dreams, prophecies, and the Urim. That's not to say that God didn't guide people through those means. He did. But the moment your attitude is to like *even those true forms of revelation more than the Bible*, we have a Saul syndrome. The Saul syndrome is that the inspired word of God is no fun, and sometimes it is too uncomfortable. God had already infallibly revealed in chapters 13 and 15 exactly what Saul should have done. And Saul didn't like that. So he went to God to seek a *different* revelation. And I'm sure that if the Urim had *been* available and had told him the same thing that Samuel had told him (step down from the throne), he would have sought another form of revelation – perhaps another prophet. And if another prophet had confirmed Samuel, he would have hoped for a dream. Do you get the point? He is looking elsewhere than the Bible for wisdom. And where did that eventually lead? It led straight into the occult.

And there are a lot of charismatics who are deep into the occult. Not all Charismatics, but there are a lot that are. And the reason I say they are deep into the occult is not because I don't think God can guide us. I think He can. But he will never guide us contrary to the Scriptures. I had one person tell me that God gave him permission to divorce his wife and talk somebody else's wife into marrying him once she got a divorce. And I told him, "Well

the Bible doesn't give you permission." But he insisted that God gave him permission. Well, that's demonic. I had another charismatic tell me, "I don't need to read the Bible. God speaks to me directly." Any time guidance pulls you away from the Bible, it is a sign of a religious spirit. And so it is significant that Deuteronomy 18 contrasts the teaching of Scripture by the Levites (that's verses 1-8 – that was the main job of the Levites – Deuteronomy 18 contrasts that) with every form of what is normally thought of as the occult (in verses 9-14) and then moves straight into false prophecy that claims to be speaking in the name of the Lord. It's always a temptation.

So my urging is that you be anchored in the Bible, that you meditate on God's Word day and night, that you allow God's Word to do its cleansing activity in your lives, that you ask God's Spirit to make the Word of God come alive to you, and to help you to understand it, and that you use the Word of God as a sword to resist the devil. We must be Scripture founded and Scripture saturated. 2Peter tells us that the Bible gives us everything that pertains to life and godliness. This was one of the differences between David and Saul. Saul was selective in his use of Scripture. David loved the whole of God's Word and the Psalm said that as a result he hated every evil way. If instead of seeking for new non-Scriptural knowledge, we can make this Scripture our prayer, we will be on safe ground. Here's the Scripture: "**Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.**" That was David's passion. And the Psalms that he wrote during this period are wonderful Psalms for spiritual warfare. They give us an anchor to keep from getting sucked into the occult. Brothers and sisters – avoid the occult, plead the blood of Christ, and stick to the Bible, and you will have nothing to worry about because (as 1 John words) when you guard yourself the wicked one cannot touch you. Abide in Christ and you are as safe as safe can be. Amen.

Let's pray.

A Walk On the Dark Side 1 Samuel 28:3,6,7

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 3-18-2012

Introduction

- I. Saul's walk with the occult started much earlier (v. 3 with chapters 13,15)
 - A. Saul's downward slide started when he ignored inspired revelation (chapters 13,15) and God said, "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (15:23).
 - B. That rebellion opened Saul to demonization (16:14ff)
 - C. Demons can be very religious (v. 6,10 with 17:37; 19:6; 23:7,21)
 - D. Yet those who rebel against God's infallible revelation, hope they can hear something less clear (v. 6) and are even open to alternative forms of guidance (v. 7; see Deut. 18 for the connection between all occult manifestations (vv. 9-14) and professing believers who claim to be prophets but are not (vv. 20-22)
- II. How serious is dabbling with the occult? (vv. 3b,9-10)
 - A. The law gave the death penalty for anyone who even remotely dabbled with the occult (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:6,27; Deut. 18:9-14)
 - B. Kings were judged by how they dealt with these spiritists (2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24; 2 Chr 33:6).
 - C. God destroyed Saul for two things: unfaithfulness and consulting a medium (1Chron. 10:13; cf. Lev. 20:6)
 - D. People are actually defiled by them (Lev. 19:31)
- III. A séance at night (v. 8) – Is it simply a hoax?
 - A. While some séances might be simply hoaxes that use sleight of hand, illusion, ventriloquism, etc., the Bible assumes that this is often the work of demons, not actual communication with the dead.
 - B. Though séances never really communicate with the dead, in this particular situation God did a miracle by bringing Samuel forward
 1. Before she could even go through her rituals, Samuel appeared.
 2. She screamed in fright, indicating that this was not expected.
 3. Her response to Saul indicates that she realized that when the real thing happened, her client must have been the king.
 4. The writer says that Saul "perceived" correctly "that it was Samuel" (v. 14) and continues to indicate that Samuel had come up (vv. 15ff).
 5. However, other Scriptures indicate that there was a reason for the medium's surprise – only God by a miracle can bring the spirits of dead men back to men (Ezek. 26:20-21; 32:18-32; Jonah 2:6; Luke 16:26; Eph. 4:8-10; 2Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 9:2).

Conclusion – God calls us not to play around with anything occult, and the story of Saul is a classic story of the negative impact that the demonic can have upon one's life.

