

# The King, the Witch and the Prophet

Text: I Samuel 28:3-25

In this chapter in our series on the Life of David, our hero is not our main focus. We will focus on a king about to be sentenced to death, a witch living under the sentence of death (Exodus 22:18) and a prophet who has already died.

## I. SAUL'S HEAVEN BECOMES BRASS.

I Samuel 28:6

God is not hearing the prayers of Saul. As a matter of fact, Heaven has become silent to Saul. In Deuteronomy 11:26-32, God tells Israel that when they go into the Promised Land, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin would assemble on Mount Gerizim for the blessing and Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali would assemble on Mount Ebal for the curse (Deuteronomy 27:11-13). Gerizim represented the blessings, which history says was a very fertile, plush and beautiful. Ebal represented the curses and was barren, dry and unfruitful. The people were commanded to hear the words and say, Amen! In the valley between the mountains were the priests and surrounding them were the Levites. They stood in the valley with the Ark of the Covenant, looking at Gerizim for the blessing and toward Ebal for the cursing. Observe the result of the Lord's blessings in Deuteronomy 28:7, 13, 14. And notice the contrast of the consequences of curses: Deuteronomy 28:23-28. Especially listen to these words found in Deuteronomy 28:23: "And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron."

According to I Samuel 28:6, Saul doesn't hear from God in dreams, by the Urim or prophets. Saul had massacred the priests earlier, so he doesn't include them in the list.

## II. SAUL CONSULTS HELL TO FIND HEAVEN'S PLANS.

I Samuel 28:7-10

Deuteronomy 18:9-13 strictly forbids the attempt to consult with familiar spirits and communicate with the dead as abominable. Saul had removed those with familiar spirits and wizards out of the land (I Samuel 28:3; I Samuel 28:9). Now we find Saul in total hypocrite mode, even to the point of coming to the witch in disguise (I Samuel 28:8).

## III. THE WITCH OF ENDOR RECEIVES A SURPRISE VISITOR.

I Samuel 28:11-14

The occultist practices for the most part are "smoke and mirrors" and a heaping helping of demonic possession and oppression. These mediums did not have the ability to truly bring back the dead. This is why the witch screamed when God actually sent back Samuel to have audience with Saul.

## IV. SAMUEL REVEALS THAT RETURNING TO EARTH FROM HEAVEN IS DISTURBING.

I Samuel 28:15

Praying to mere mortals is a form of idolatry. I Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Living saints can be intercessors, but never mediators. Revelation 19:10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Acts 10:25, 26: "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."

#### V. SAMUEL DECLARES SAUL THE ENEMY OF GOD.

I Samuel 28:16

The enemies of God shall never prevail. Psalm 68:1, 2: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away:

as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God." Judges 5:20, 31: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera....So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

#### VI. SAMUEL'S FINAL PROPHECY

I Samuel 28:17-19

Saul usurped authority: I Samuel 13:12-14: "Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee."

Saul disobeyed a direct order. 1 Samuel 15:23: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

R. A. Torrey commented about this final prophecy of the prophet Samuel: "There is considerable diversity of opinion, both among learned and pious men, relative to this appearance to Saul. But the most probable opinion seems to be, that Samuel himself did actually appear to Saul, not by the power of enchantment, but by the appointment and especial mercy of God, to warn this infatuated monarch of his approaching end, that he might be reconciled with his Maker. There is not the smallest intimation of chicanery or satanic influence given in the text; but on the contrary, from the plain and obvious meaning of the language employed, it is perfectly evident that it was Samuel himself, as it is expressed in verse 14. Indeed the very soul of Samuel seems to breathe in his expressions of displeasure against the disobedience and wickedness of Saul; while the awful prophetic denunciations which accordingly came to pass, were such as neither human nor diabolical wisdom could foresee, and which could only be known to God himself, and to those to whom he chose to reveal them."

## VII. SAUL'S LAST SUPPER

I Samuel 28:20-25

Saul had become so bothered that he had not taken time to eat and now under the alarming news of his and his sons' demise, he faints away. Proverbs 24:10 says, "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." Saul's strength is small because of his choice in enemies (David) and his choice in friends, both old and new (the witch of Endor).

The fatted calf was symbolical of the rejoicing in the story of the Prodigal Son as told by Jesus: Luke 15:23: "And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." How much better an ending for Saul had he accepted God's final judgment and allowed Jonathan to kill the fatted calf and host a coronation event for the new king. What a great time to be righteous like Job who said in Job 1:21: "...Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

Conclusion:

Saul comes to the end of his life, a bitter man, immersed in his self-pity. He forgot it was God who gave him the kingdom. I Samuel 15:17: "And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?" The kingdom was not his to take, nor was it his to keep. So in his last supper we see a bitter old king, not only willing to die trying to keep that which God said was over, but even willing after Samuel's final prophecy to take his sons with him.

Our Lord's last supper, is a polar opposite. Our Lord submits His will to His Father's will. And this was Christ's attitude all the way through His life. John 8:29: "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him."

Finally, what a contrast in a man that bore the same name in the New Testament. Saul of Tarsus, who became better known as Paul said in Acts 24:16: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Paul also said concerning the hardships he endured, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Just before he died for the faith, he wrote to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7). May the Lord help us as believers to have the goal to one day hear these words spoken to us by our Lord and Savior: "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

-Pastor Pope-