

I. Introduction (to one of the strangest chapters in the Bible).

II. Saul is desperate. v. 3-6

- A. Saul is surrounded by the Philistines. v. 4,1 29:1
- B. Saul is overwhelmed by fear. v. 5 15:26 17:11 18:12,29 28:20-21 10
- C. Saul seeks, but cannot obtain, divine direction. v. 6 9:9 22:5 23:6 30:7 Num. 12:6 Gen. 20:6 37:5ff Dan. 2:3ff Mt. 1:20
- D. Why doesn't the LORD answer? 22:5,11-23 23:6 30:7 15:26 16:14 Ga. 6:7 Js. 4:2b,3

III. Saul goes so far as to inquire of a medium (witch). v. 7-14

- A. Saul seeks a medium (witch/necromancer). v. 7
 - 1. This proves that Saul's inquiry of the LORD was not sincere. v. 6
 - 2. The LORD had forbidden all pagan practice: seeking supernatural power or knowledge from Him. Dt. 18:11ff Lev. 19:31 20:6,27 Is. 8:19 29:4 II Ki. 21:6
 - 3. Saul, earlier in his reign, had sought to remove the mediums and spiritists. v. 3b
 - 4. This evil act is a cause for the LORD's judgment on Saul. 15:23 I Chr. 10:13b
- B. Saul asks the medium at Endor to bring up Samuel from the dead. v. 8-11 15:23
Why does Saul want to speak to Samuel? v. 11 15:26-35 16:2
- C. The medium appears to succeed in bringing Samuel up from the dead. v. 12-14
Why is she frightened? 15:27-28 Ps. 106:28
- D. Is this really Samuel? I Chr. 10:13
 - 1. The text says that he is Samuel and he certainly talks like Samuel. v. 15f
 - 2. God allowed this unique event for His own sovereign purpose. I Ki. 22:20ff
 - 3. Saul does not benefit. Rather, Samuel's words make his misery more intense.
- E. Samuel offers no encouragement to Saul. v. 15 Pr. 27:14
Saul, as usual, rationalizes his sin. v. 15b 13:8-14 15:13ff
- F. Samuel gives Saul the bad news: a fearful expectation of judgment. v. 16-19 He. 10:27
 - 1. *The LORD has departed from you and become your enemy.* v. 16 16:14
 - 2. *The LORD is fulfilling the prophecy that the kingdom would be torn from you and given to your better neighbor (David).* v. 17 15:26-29
 - 3. *Your judgment is fully deserved.* v. 18 15:1ff I Chron. 10:13-14
 - 4. *Tomorrow Israel will be defeated and you and your sons will die.* v. 19 31:1ff
 - 5. This is very similar to the prophecy of judgment given to Eli. 3:11ff
 - 6. Saul's death by the Philistines is an act of God's sovereign judgment. Isa. 10:5ff
- G. In what sense would Saul join Samuel? II Sa. 12:23 Ps. 49:15 Is. 49:15 Lu. 16:19-31
- H. Saul's last supper. v. 20-25
 - 1. Once mighty Saul is a terrified and broken man. v. 20 Ps. 104:29 Isa. 13:8 21:3
 - 2. The medium gives him a meal fit for a king. v. 21-25

IV. Application: How much are we like Saul?

- A. Where do you turn when you are in distress? Js. 4:2b-3
When push comes to shove, do you submit to God or do what is expedient? v. 15b
13:8-14 15:13ff
- B. Don't mess with what God has forbidden or hidden. Deut. 29:29
1. Not all spirituality is equally valid. Isa. 46:9
 2. Many dabble in the occult: astrology, ouija boards, fortune telling, palm readings, seances, witchcraft, New Age crystals, tarot cards etc. Is. 47:13 Dt. 18:9ff
 - a. Many are shams, but some may have real demonic powers. I Co. 10:19-20
 - b. Some of us were led astray by such things before we were converted. I Co. 12:2
 - c. When we were converted we repented of these evil practices. Acts 19:19
 3. Is it wrong to read books, watch movies, or play games about witchcraft and magic?
 4. Do we need to learn more about demonic powers? II Pe. 1:3 Dt. 29:29 Js. 4:7
Ro. 16:19 I Co. 10:19-20
 5. Some professing Christians try to manipulate God in a way that resembles how pagans try to control their deities. Acts 18:9ff 19:11-17
 6. Some professing Christians are led astray because they seek extra-biblical supernatural experiences and knowledge. Deut. 29:29 Jer. 23:25,28
 7. God guides us through His infallible and sufficient Word. II Ti. 3:16-17 II Pe. 1:3
- C. Seek the LORD while He may be found. Isa. 55:6
1. Don't continue to resist God lest you be hardened beyond recovery. v. 6,15b
Heb. 3:8,15 Ps. 68:18 Mark 4:20-25 John 2:23-25 Luke 16:25-26
 2. Sometimes the LORD temporarily hides His face from believers so that they might repent anew and enjoy restored fellowship with Him. 30:6b Ps. 13:1ff 30:7

V. Conclusion.

- A. Where do we see Christ in this text?
1. Jesus also knew the day of his death in advance. John 17:1 Mt. 26:36ff
 2. Jesus had a significant last meal (which is in stark contrast to Saul's).
 3. Jesus too was forsaken by God. v. 15b-16 Ps. 22:1 Mark 15:33-34 Isa. 53:4ff
- B. What will you experience in your hour of great need? Isa. 13:8 21:3 55:6 I Th. 5:3

Discussion questions

1. Why won't the LORD answer Saul's inquiries? v. 6
How do some people show their insincerity when they claim to seek God's will?
2. What aspects of Saul's character are displayed by his decision to seek a medium? v. 7
How can we be guilty of the same kind of sin?
3. Did the medium actually succeed in contacting Samuel?
If so, how did she do it?
4. Did Saul gain any benefit from knowing what was about to happen?
Why does the LORD keep certain knowledge from us?
5. Why is it wrong to seek extra-biblical supernatural guidance or experiences? Dt. 29:29
How do professing Christians sometimes act like pagans?
6. Is it possible that some occultic practices actually work?
Does that make them valid?
7. Do we need to do extensive studies of people's experiences with demons?
8. How does God guide us?
9. Where do we see Christ in this text?
10. What is the big picture of what God is doing in this passage?