

Lesson 1: Saul Visits a Medium

Text: I Samuel 28:3-25



"Growing In The Word": Lesson Text & Discussion

As we ended the last United Kingdom study, David was continually being hunted down by Saul, the king of Israel. In I Samuel 27, David fled to the land of the Philistines to hide from Saul, and Saul stopped pursuing him. According to I Samuel 27:5-7, how long did David live among the Philistines, and where? (One year and four months in the city of Ziklag) David did not know when the reign of Saul would end, but as we reach the end of I Samuel, we see that Saul's time as king of Israel is coming to a close.

Read I Samuel 28:3-6. Samuel was the last judge of Israel, and he had already died (I Samuel 25), so you may wonder why his death is mentioned again in this chapter. Saul had relied on Samuel for advice and God's instructions, and he needed to talk to him now but couldn't because Samuel was dead. Saul was facing a situation that made him very afraid. He asked the Lord what he should do, but the Lord did not answer him. Why was Saul afraid? (The Philistine army had gathered to make war against him.) Saul wanted to know what was going to happen. What were the three ways the Lord could have used to answer Saul? (1- Dreams, 2-Urim, 3-Prophets) Sometimes the Lord would speak to someone in a dream or vision. Sometimes His message would be delivered through a prophet like Samuel. And sometimes God would answer through the Urim. The Urim was one of two stones that were used to give a "yes" or "no" answer from the Lord. But Saul only received silence from the Lord. He was desperate to get his answer and was going to break one of his own commands to get what he wanted.

Read I Samuel 28:7-11. Who had king Saul banished from the land of Israel? (Mediums and spiritists) A medium was someone who acted as a "go-between" between the spirit world and the world of the living. She or he would "speak" to the dead. Attempts to speak to the dead were forbidden by the Lord in the law of Moses. According to **Deuteronomy 18:10-11**, who else besides mediums were an abomination to the Lord and forbidden among God's people? (Anyone who participated in human sacrifice, those who practiced witchcraft, soothsayers, sorcerers, conjurers of spells, and spiritists) According to **Leviticus 20:27**, what was the punishment for being a medium? (Death by stoning)

Why do you think Saul disguised himself when he visited the woman in En Dor? (Allow answers) This woman was a medium, practicing something that was forbidden. She knew if she were caught by the king of Israel, she could be stoned to death. Saul disguised himself so that she would not know who it was who had come to her. Who did Saul ask the medium to bring up from the dead? (Samuel)

Read I Samuel 28:12-14. What was the woman's reaction when she saw Samuel appear from the realm of the dead? (She cried out with a loud voice.) She was surprised and dismayed. She also knew immediately that it was the king who was with her and had asked her to do this. Saul assured her that no harm would come to her. Was Saul obeying or

disobeying God by telling her this? (Allow answers) Saul was anxious to know what the woman saw that made her cry out. What did the woman describe to Saul? (She saw a spirit come up from the earth. It was an old man wearing a mantle.) Saul knew that this was Samuel. How did he react to what she said? (He bowed down with his face to the ground before Samuel.)

Read I Samuel 28:15-20. Why did Saul want to speak to Samuel? (Saul wanted answers about facing the Philistines, but God was no longer with him and would not answer him through dreams or prophets. He wanted Samuel to tell him what to do.) Was Samuel pleased with Saul? (No) Samuel knew why the Lord was not with Saul anymore, and Saul should have known the reason as well. What had Saul done to displease the Lord so much? (Saul had not obeyed the Lord's commands concerning Amalek.) In I Samuel 15, the Lord had given instructions to Saul to destroy all of the Amalekites because God was executing judgment on that nation. Saul did not do what the Lord commanded. As a result, the Lord was going to remove Saul from being king and give the kingdom to another. To whom did Samuel say the Lord was going to give the kingdom? (David) Samuel wasn't finished giving Saul the bad news. He told him what the result of the battle with the Philistines would be. Who would win? (The Philistines) How did Saul react to everything Samuel told him? (He fell on the ground, full of fear.)

Read I Samuel 28:21-25. The medium had been silent through all of this, but she saw Saul afraid and weak on the ground and tried to help him. What did she tell him he needed to do? (She said he needed to eat something to give him strength.) Did Saul feel like eating? (No) His servants and the medium finally convinced him that he needed to eat something. What did the woman prepare for him to eat? (She fixed meat and unleavened bread.) What did Saul do after he ate his meal? (He and his servants left the home of the medium.) How do you think Saul felt as he left, thinking of everything Samuel has just told him? (Allow answers.)

Review Questions: (Answers are provided in the Answer Key.)

1. How long did David live among the Philistines, and where did he dwell?
2. Which judge of Israel is mentioned in I Samuel 28?
3. What had king Saul banished from the land of Israel?
4. What is a medium?
5. How does the Lord feel about mediums and spiritists?
6. According to Leviticus 20:27, what was the punishment for being a medium?
7. Why did king Saul disguise himself when he went to visit the medium?
8. What did Saul promise the medium?
9. Whose spirit did Saul ask the medium to bring up?

10. How did Saul react when he knew that Samuel had appeared?
11. Why did Saul want to speak to Samuel?
12. Why was the kingdom taken away from Saul?
13. Who was the Lord going to give it to instead?
14. Who did Samuel say would be victorious in the upcoming battle, the Israelites or the Philistines?
15. What was Saul's reaction when he heard everything Samuel had to say to him?
16. What did the woman do to try to help Saul after Samuel finished speaking to him?
17. What did she prepare for him?
18. Did Saul keep his word about no harm coming to her for breaking the command of the king?



"Putting Down Roots": Memory Work

- Memorize the 15 judges of Israel: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson, Eli, Samuel
- Memorize Leviticus 19:31
- Memorize Isaiah 8:19



"Farther Afield": Map Work

Map 1

- Locate the city of Ziklag
- Locate the city of Ramah
- Locate the city of Shunem
- Locate the city of Endor

- Locate Mt. Gilboa



"Harvest Fun": Games & Activities

- Dress in Disguise - Take turns dressing up as a Bible character, then let others try to guess who you are in three guesses. Don't forget to use props such as a shepherd's staff, a crown, purple clothing for royalty, a trumpet, a sword, a gardening tool, etc. See how creative you can be and if you are able to fool the guessers. Saul disguised himself when he visited the medium, and his disguise fooled her into not recognizing the king of Israel.
- Bake Unleavened Bread - One of the foods the medium prepared for king Saul was unleavened bread. This bread will be very flat because it doesn't have anything to leaven it (make it rise). Here is a recipe to try:

Unleavened bread

1 cup all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, or as needed (optional)

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup water, or more if needed

1 tsp. olive oil, or as needed

Move an oven rack near the top of the oven and preheat oven to 475 degrees. Preheat a heavy baking sheet in the oven. Set the timer for 16 minutes (18 max). Dust a clean work surface and a rolling pin with flour. Place the flour into a mixing bowl. Pour the water into the flour one tablespoon at a time and stir with a fork until the dough forms a rough ball. Remove the dough to the prepared work surface, knead rapidly and firmly until smooth, about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Divide the dough into four equal pieces; cut each piece in half again to get 8 pieces total. Swiftly roll each piece into a ball. Roll each piece of dough out into a 5-inch pancake, dusting the top and rolling pin with flour as needed. Gradually roll the pancakes out to a size of about 8 inches, increasing the size of each by about 1 inch, then letting the dough rest for a few seconds before rolling again to the finished size. Roll from the center out. The bread rounds should be very thin. Using a fork, quickly pierce each bread all over, about 25 times, to prevent rising. The holes should go completely through the bread. Flip the bread over, and pierce each piece another 25 times with the fork. With at least 5

minutes left on the timer, remove the hot baking sheet from the preheated oven and place the dough rounds onto the baking sheet. Place the baking sheet onto the rack near the top of the oven and bake for 2 minutes; turn the rounds over and bake for 2 minutes more, until the bread rounds are lightly browned and crisp. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Lightly brush olive oil onto each round and, if desired, sprinkle with salt.



"Digging Deeper": Research

- Saul and the Amalekites - The kingdom was taken away from Saul because of his disobedience concerning the Amalekites. Read I Samuel 15:3-9, and list what God's specific commands were, and what Saul actually did. Then think about, and answer these questions: 1) Did Saul obey some of what God said? 2) Is partial obedience ever acceptable to God? 3) What does it mean to fully obey the Lord? 4) Read Matthew 7:21-23. What does the Lord expect us to do to be acceptable to Him? 5) Was it okay for Saul (or for you and me) to decide what we think is right to do for God? Why or why not?
- Urim and Thummim - Exodus 28:30 first mentions these, and we read about the Urim being one of the ways that Saul could have gotten an answer from the Lord. Not a lot is known about the Urim or Thummim or exactly how they were used. Learn what you can about who wore them, where he wore them, and what they were used for. Who was the last known person in the Bible to use them? There are some different interesting theories as to how they worked.



"Food For Thought": Puzzles

- Scrambled Words - Unscramble the following letters to make a word from the lesson. Then write the letter of the correct description of each word in the short blanks. Answers are provided in the Answer Key.

1. a d i v d
2. m u m d i e
3. s e n s i p l i h t i

4. lem u a s _____
5. pit r i s _____
6. ke m a l a _____
7. so die be c n i e d _____
8. do n k i n g _____
9. de a l e v e n n u _____
10. s i s d u g e i _____

Descriptions:

- a) This was taken away from Saul by the Lord.
- b) Saul did not completely destroy this nation as God commanded.
- c) This nation was encamped against Israel to do battle.
- d) God was going to make this man the next king of Israel.
- e) Saul visited this woman in En Dor.
- f) Saul was given this kind of bread to eat.
- g) Saul wanted to speak to this judge who had died.
- h) The Lord was angry with Saul because of this.
- i) Saul wore this to fool the woman at En Dor.
- j) The woman at En Dor saw this rising out of the earth.

- Fix What's False - Read the following account of the lesson. Every time you read a word or phrase that is incorrect, cross it out and write the right word or words above it. Answers are provided in the Answer Key.

Saul was worried about going to battle against the Hittites. He visited a man in EnDor

who was a medium. Mediums were forbidden by God according to a law recorded in the

book of Deuteronomy and Exodus. Saul wanted the medium to bring up one of the prophets, Moses. Saul was told that God had taken the kingdom away from him because of his disobedience with the Amorites and given it to Jonathan instead. Saul was also told that he would not be victorious against the Hittites. Saul heard all of this news and jumped up and down. The medium told him he just needed to sleep.



"Fruits Of Our Labor": Crafts

- Create a Costume - What do you think the spirit of Samuel might have looked like as it appeared? The woman of En Dor described him looking like an old man wearing a mantle (cloak). Try making a costume to wear that would make you look like Samuel. What could you use to make you look old, with white hair? And a beard?
- Draw or paint a picture of the scene where Samuel appears to Saul as a spirit from the grave.