



FEED MY SHEEP

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“Channeling” through the End Door

The title is a play on words because our subject matter this month concerns a desperate King Saul consulting a channeler who lived at Endor.

KJV 1 Samuel 28:1a And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel.

There were three reasons why the Philistines decided to invade Israel. First, Samuel had recently died and, although there were other prophets on the rise, none of them compared to the prominence of Samuel. He was an inspiration to all Israel. Secondly, the Philistines no doubt were aware of Saul’s mental deterioration. They knew that the king of the Israelites was unstable which means that the nation was vulnerable militarily. Thirdly, David, the only military leader whom they *did* fear, was on Saul’s most wanted list. Moreover, he and all his troops and their families were now living under Philistine protection. This will present a sticky dilemma for David.

1b: And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

This is *exactly* what David had hoped to prevent—having to take up arms against his own king and people. But his earlier pretense and deception had only caused King Achish to place the utmost confidence in David’s loyalty. So David had to continue the charade.

2a And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do.

Interesting response! David has truly learned the fine arts of politics. That is a very ambiguous statement. David could be saying to himself, “Yes, you know what I can do. With God’s help, I can defeat you guys with one hand tied behind my back.” Of course, Achish has already been deceived by David and Achish wants to believe the best about him; meaning, that David is, and will be totally loyal to Achish himself. And so...

2b: And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

Again, a peculiar figure of speech here. What it means is that Achish is saying “Yes, David, I know your great skills and that is why I hereby appoint you to be the head of my personal bodyguard company.” This was not only a position requiring high trust, but it was a singularly high honor. But David is probably thinking to himself at this point: “Why, oh why did I ever do such an idiotic thing as to think I’d be better off seeking political asylum with the Philistines?”

I am sure David had no idea *how* he was going to get out of going to war against his own people. He is perhaps beginning to wonder if he has been disobedient to God by coming to live among the Philistines. After all, the prophet Gad had given him a word from the Lord back in...

1 Samuel 22:5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

David might be wondering: Did that mean just for a time, and therefore it was okay for me to seek asylum among the Philistines? Or was I supposed to stay in the land of Judah, no matter what? Maybe I disobeyed God. But if I had stayed there, I might have been killed. Then, again, maybe not, because Samuel prophesied that I would be king of Israel.

Do you see how his faith was vacillating? That *never* happens to me, how about you? (Is my sarcasm evident?) The point is that all the great persons of faith (overcomers) had their moments of wavering. Therefore, we should not become discouraged when the same happens to us. Next, important historical notes are given to set the stage for the incident that follows.

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

Scripture had previously informed us that Samuel was dead, but it is reiterated here for a purpose which will become clear later. The fact that Samuel is dead is followed immediately by the statement that Saul had driven the necromancers out of the land of Israel. Why the juxtaposition of those two facts? Again, we will see shortly.

This is the only mention of Saul's having executed or driven the necromancers from the land. He probably did so quite early in his reign when he was still zealous for the laws of Yahweh. The verse actually uses the terms "wizards" and "those that had familiar spirits." Without getting too technical, both of them simply mean "necromancers" in this case.

But what are necromancers? Well, they abound in our nation today, except they don't call themselves necromancers. In recent centuries, they were called "mediums." But now, even that word has become passé, and they call themselves "channelers."

They claim to bring forth information from persons who have died. They do this usually by going into a trance, during which some departed spirit *allegedly* takes control of the channeler's body, or at least the vocal chords, and they speak forth answers to questions, or sometimes they just dictate information "from the other side."

They can call it *channeling*. The bible calls it necromancy or wizardry or having a familiar spirit. It is forbidden by the laws of God. Let's look at these laws.

Leviticus 19:31 Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am YHWH your God.

Leviticus 20:6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.

Leviticus 20:27 A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

Deuteronomy 18:10 There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto YHWH: and because of these abominations YHWH thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

Do you get the distinct impression that God is quite serious about necromancy? The death penalty is mandated because it falls under the first commandment. We just read how necromancy was characterized as "to go a whoring" (after other gods). To seek answers from the spirits of the dead is classified as idolatry and idolaters were to suffer capital punishment. Instead of looking to false gods, our Father wants His people to seek *Him* and *ask Him* for answers. After all, did He not say "... ask and it shall be given to you?"

1 Samuel 28:4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of YHWH,

YHWH answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Dreams, Urim and prophets—these were the three primary and legitimate means of obtaining guidance from God. Saul inquired. So why did God not answer him? The reason is found in....

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, YHWH'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

One almost feels sorry for poor old Saul. In all his agony of mind and heavy emotional distress, it apparently never occurred to him to seek forgiveness by confessing his sins to God. That would have opened up a channel to heaven ...if you'll pardon me using the word "channel" there.

But the pitiful Saul was either too stubborn or too blinded by his own rebellion that he could not see this simple solution. All he was interested in was getting counsel from *some* kind of higher power regarding what he should do now....advice from *someone* on how he could escape this mess.

Saul is running out of options. He has opened this door and tried that door and found no help. Jesus is the only door which has the solution to Saul's problems. But of course, Jesus had not yet come in the flesh. However, Saul knew that the door marked "Yahweh" was the one to open.

But in his obstinate state of mind and his spirit of rebellion, he would not choose that door. Finally, in his perverted thinking, he was left with only one option. One more door to try. That was the door all the way at the end. We could call it the Endor.

7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

The town of Endor is located about seven miles north of Mount Gilboa. This means that Endor was almost directly north of and very close to where the Philistines were encamped. However, Saul's des-

peration has become so complete that he is willing to risk his life in sneaking around the Philistines just to get to the witch of Endor.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.

The phrase "bring up" there has reference to the belief by those who consulted mediums, that the medium or channeler could bring up from the underworld the spirit of a dead person.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

This woman is naturally extremely cautious about whom she does business with. She is afraid that she is being entrapped.

10 And Saul sware to her by YHWH, saying, As YHWH liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

This oath was apparently enough for her to proceed although it truly puzzles me why those who practice necromancy would put any stock in an oath made in the name of Yahweh! We could speculate that by this time, the witch had suspected and is now certain that her unusually tall and commanding figure of a guest is none other than the king himself. As she reads his face and body language, she perceives his desperate situation.

She probably also knew that the Philistines armies were right around the corner and that for Saul or any government agent to come to her this late at night, risking life and limb to bypass the Philistines, is a pretty safe indication that they are not here simply to entrap her.

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to

Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

The witch was evidently shocked and surprised at what she saw. In an instant, she puts it all together. She thinks to herself: “Hmmm....”

Saul and Samuel were on the outs. Saul has driven David from the land. Saul can't get an answer from YHWH or else why would he be here consulting me? Saul is scared out of his wits because the Philistines are ready to conquer Israel. Saul has no options left but to try to get some advice from his old counselor Samuel.”

All this leads her to be absolutely sure that the tall guy in the funny clothes is King Saul himself. So she is a bit miffed that he deceived her.

13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

The word for gods there is *elohim*, which as most of us realize, does not always refer to YHWH and the Godhead. Depending on the context, it can also refer to civil rulers and judges, or to false gods or angels, and in this context to whatever apparition it was that she perceived.

14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh 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 himself.

15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

In verse 6, it had mentioned the three legitimate methods for obtaining guidance from God. But here Saul mentions only two. Why did he not mention the Urim here? Recall that when Saul killed the high priest and the priests of Nob, that Abiathar fled with the ephod and the Urim and came to David. So Saul no longer even had access to the Urim to even *try* to

contact God in that manner. All he had left were dreams and perhaps some false prophets.

One might wonder then, why is the Urim mentioned at all in verse 6? Well, it is probably because verse 6 need not be speaking of the present time of this witch of Endor incident. In other words, verse 6 is simply a general statement of the fact that for some time now, up until this point, Saul had not been able to hear from the Lord. Allow me to paraphrase it to make clear what I mean. It would read:

1 Samuel 28:6 (paraphrased) And over the past several years when Saul enquired of YHWH from time to time, YHWH answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Therefore, by the time of this incident, Saul had given up even trying. Before we go on, we ought to pause and consider just what was happening here. Bible scholars and theologians have debated for centuries about what exactly it was that appeared to the witch of Endor. Many believe that those who had a familiar spirit were generally in the business of ventriloquism and faking the various phenomena, playing on people's gullibility for profit. That still occurs widely in our era. But seeing how shocked this witch was, could it really have been the person Samuel resurrected and reappearing in the flesh?

Or was it the *spirit* of Samuel, a non-material entity wrapped in a hooded mantle?

Or was it a demon, a devil, an evil spirit, *im-personating* the dead Samuel?

We will give our opinion in due course. Here is a preliminary hint at which direction we lean and we will address it more fully in the next FMS. But *now* we will recognize the critical importance of the fact that the Lord was **not** answering Saul by the prophets. Samuel was a prophet. Then, does it not stand to reason that whatever apparition the witch saw, that *it was not Samuel?!*

(To be continued)

Feed My Sheep is a part of the teaching ministry of James W. Bruggeman and is sent out freely upon request. The tithes and gifts of those who are fed by it make it possible for us to continue in ministry. Gifts may be sent to P.O. Box 6388, Asheville, NC 28816.