



1 Samuel 28:3-25

“The Emperor Enters Endor”

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37:59

So, grab your Bible. We're going to be in 1 Samuel 28 this morning, and the message I've simply entitled, The Emperor Enters Endor. All right. So, we're going to be looking at Saul. I know Saul was not an emperor,

38:12

he was a king, but as we look at 1 Samuel 28, we see Saul go to this town called Endor to seek out a medium and to conduct a séance. Now, Endor, maybe it's just me. I think there's probably many of us in the room who it just conjures too many thoughts of Star Wars for us to not make a joke about it.

38:33

So, no Ewoks in the story this week. Vader is not in the story this week. I don't know how that ended up in the slide. Hiding in the bottom there. Alright, we've had our fun. So I want to invite you to grab your Bible and make your way to 1 Samuel 28 where we're going to see that Saul is going to make one final blunder as he is going to reinforce what we've seen of Saul for quite a while now.

39:01

Saul has been on a downward spiral for years at this point. And what had started with such promising optimism has gone off the rails. Saul has become more and more disobedient to what God has instructed of him and how Saul was supposed to lead the people of Israel.

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All the way back in 1 Samuel 13, you may remember, Saul had decided he was going to do things his way and he chose to offer the sacrifice himself instead of waiting for Samuel and following God's instructions.

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He had continued in 1 Samuel 15, we saw that Saul had decided to disobey God's explicit commands, thinking that he knew better than God, that he was going to take this prize from the Amalekites and that he was going to decide better than God would what should be done with those people and with those possessions.

39:58

Any moments of regret that we've seen from Saul over the past several months through this story of King Saul, they've generally been short-lived, haven't they? With no evidence of true repentance, we've seen Saul in a moment go, uh-oh, because he'd get caught or he'd get in trouble or something would go wrong for him, but there was no evidence of true repentance.

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There was no true change in his actions. He simply would get in trouble for some reason and then he would go back to living the exact same way that he had once the trouble

had passed. Saul was going to regret getting in trouble, but there was no evidence that he would ever change.

40:35

He didn't ask God to forgive him for his disobedience. He didn't turn and change his course in life. And so this week as we come to 1 Samuel 28, we are approaching the end for King Saul. What we're going to see is that Saul acts surprised when God doesn't answer him in a timely fashion.

40:54

He comes to God again expecting God to bail him out and save him from a terrible circumstance that is coming against Saul and coming against Israel. But after Saul has ignored God's commands at every turn, I don't think we should be surprised when God goes silent on Saul.

41:12

And so Saul decides in his own wisdom to turn to the occult, to turn to witchcraft, to seek answers in our passage this week. So we're going to read our entire passage, look at just a really strange story that you wouldn't necessarily expect to find in the Bible.

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We're going to look at 1 Samuel 28. We're going to start in verse 3 where we left off last week and continue down through the end of the chapter. I invite you to follow along in your copy or on the screens as I read.

41:40

Starting in 1 Samuel 28, verse 3, it tells us, Now Samuel had died, and all of Israel had mourned for him, and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the necromancers out of the land.

41:53

And the Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem. And Saul gathered all of Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. And when Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.

42:07

And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. And then Saul said to his servants, Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.

42:21

And his servant said to him, Behold, there is a medium at Endor. And so Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went. He and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, Divine for me by a spirit, and bring up for me whoever I shall name to you.

42:37

And the woman said to him, Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the necromancers from the land. Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death? But Saul swore to her by the Lord, as the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.

42:54

Then the woman said, Who shall I bring up for you? And he said, Bring up Samuel for me. When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, Why have you deceived me?

43:06

You are Saul. And the king said to her, Do not be afraid. What do you see? And the woman said to Saul, I see a god coming up out of the earth. And he said to her, What is his appearance? And she said, An old man is coming up.

43:19

He is wrapped in a robe. And Saul knew that it was Samuel who, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage. Then Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? And Saul answered, I am in great distress for the Philistines

43:36

are warring against me. God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore, I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do. Samuel said, Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy?

43:53

The Lord has done to you as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek.

44:07

Therefore, the Lord has done this thing to you this day. Moreover, the Lord will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me in death. The Lord will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.

44:25

Then Saul fell at once full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night.

The woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him, Behold, your servant has obeyed you.

44:42

I have taken my life in my hand, and have listened to you, listened to what you have said to me. Now therefore, you also obey your servant. Let me set a morsel of bread before you, and eat that you may have strength when you go on your way.

44:56

And he refused and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, urged him, and he listened to their words. So he arose from the earth and sat on the bed. Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly killed it, and she took flour and kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread out of it, and she put it before Saul and his servants, and they ate.

45:16

Then they rose and went away that night. These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the opportunity to gather here together, and to consider what Saul, how this story might have instruction for us, how you might speak to us today.

45:34

For God, we pray that as we come to your word, that you would speak, and that your servants would listen. That's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. All right, well as we jump into the story, the first thing that we see is that Saul visits a medium.

45:48

He says, go find me a woman who is a medium. No, he's not talking about what size she wore. All right, we didn't have robes in smalls, mediums, and larges. But this episode that we see here in 1 Samuel 28, it occurs after the events of 1 Samuel 29.

46:04

We kind of get the timeline mixed up just a little bit here, but it's brought out a sequence for us to compare the parallels between the problems that are facing David that we looked at last week, and what we see Saul facing here as he is preparing to come against the Philistines in this week's passage.

46:25

Verse 3 kind of sets the stage for us, giving us some basic footnotes of what's going on at this time, reminding us of a few things that we've seen in previous chapters. Reminds us that Samuel, who had often given King Saul spiritual guidance.

46:39

He had been the one who had spoken on God's behalf throughout most of Saul's life. Now, Samuel is dead. Samuel is gone. Saul has removed all of the the necromancers and the mediums from the land of Israel.

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That was a good thing, right? As he had followed God's laws, followed God's instructions, and did not permit these people to operate freely in Israel, as they did in many of the surrounding countries around Israel.

47:05

All the way back in the Old Testament, in God's law, in the book of Leviticus, chapter 20, it says that a man or a woman who is a medium or a necromancer shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones.

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Their blood shall be upon them. Saul knew what God had instructed of his people, and Saul knew by extension, by getting rid of these people out of the land of Israel, saying that they could not operate in Israel.

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We know that Saul knew that it was sinful or wrong for them to be there, and it was certainly sinful for someone to consult them in an issue. It kind of adds a degree of difficulty for Saul as he decides God's not going to respond to him in any other way.

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He needed to consult this woman who was in hiding because of Saul's judgments. So verse 4, we kind of see that the body of the story begin, and it kind of sets the stage for us as we see there's another conflict brewing.

48:03

There's another battle coming between the Israelites and the Philistine armies. Now there's a difference though in this battle from the previous encounters that Saul and the Israelite army had been experiencing as they had faced off against the Philistines.

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Because in the past, many of those battles had typically been fought in the mountainous terrain, kind of in the hills surrounding Israel, where the geography had leveled the playing field, for lack of a better term.

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The mountainous territory had leveled the playing field because many of the Philistine's advantages were taken from them because of the terrain. But here in the area between Shunem and Gilboa, there was a flat area.

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There was an ideal battleground that was going to be the home of this next battle. And so the Philistine horses, the Philistine chariots, the advantages that they had, they would be on full display in this conflict as the Israelites were going to face the full onslaught of the Philistine army.

49:07

Saul knows as things are beginning to take shape as this battle is approaching, Saul knows this isn't likely to go well. But in the face of his fear and his impending doom, this sense that he has of what's coming with this conflict between him and the Philistines, Saul decided again, as we've seen him do several times up to this point, uh oh, I'm in trouble, I guess I should go talk to God about it.

49:34

How many times have we seen that? When things are good, Saul says, no, no, no, I've got this under control. Then when things turn sideways on him, when life gets hard, when waters get deep, Saul comes running back to God and he looks to God to save the day in whatever it is that's going on.

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So in this moment, Saul realizes that this battle is not likely to go well and so he tries to seek God with all the various methods that he has at his disposal. Maybe we should take the Urim and the Thummim that we've seen a couple of different times.

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Maybe they'll give direction for me as he would look to them. Nope. Maybe God will speak in a dream. Nope. Maybe the prophets have something to offer. Nope. One commentary I was reading made an important observation.

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John McKay, he notes, in all of this, Saul is seeking not a way back to God, but a way to avert impending disaster. Saul's not looking for God, he's looking for what God would offer him, the help that God was supposed to provide for him.

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Saul is attempting to use God for his own selfish purposes in this moment. This isn't the first time that we've seen this from Saul, in fact, it seems to be the norm for him at this point, but for some strange reason Saul seems surprised when God doesn't answer him as he comes asking for another handout.

51:02

In none of the methods that Saul used, none of them worked because God was refusing to speak to the man that he had already clearly rejected. Saul, I have rejected you just explicitly in previous chapters.

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Saul had been given the right way of doing things, but he refused over and over and over again. Saul refused to do things God's way. It made me think, you know, when God seems distant, I don't think it's because God just wants to be mean to us.

51:35

Most of the time when God seems distant from us, it's because we have done something. If we are far from God, God hasn't moved, we are the ones that often move. When God seems distant, it's not because he just wants to be mean, it's because we have disobeyed that we are refusing to repent, that we are refusing to come to God in the ways that God has instructed of us, what God has commanded.

51:58

That's what we see here with Saul in this moment. And just as foolish as it is for us to pray while we are living in open or flagrant or unrepentant sin, if we come to God saying,

no, no, God, I'm going to do what I want, but I need you to give me what I demand, that seems pretty foolish, doesn't it?

52:19

Just as foolish as it would be for us to come to God and say, I'm going to do what I want, and I want you to also give me what I want. We shouldn't act surprised when God doesn't answer us in those moments, and we shouldn't be surprised that God is not responding to Saul in this moment either.

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We don't just follow God through this sort of what I feel or by calling Miss Cleo, which is what Saul's about to do in just a moment. We don't just follow God by doing whatever we think is best. God has given us clear instructions in his word.

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God has told us how we should respond. God has told us how we should come to him. God has instructed us clearly in his word, so maybe we should start there. Maybe we should start by being obedient to do what God has instructed us to do.

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It seems like that might be helpful for Saul in this moment, but for whatever reason, that doesn't seem to be an option for Saul. Being left with no other options that Saul could perceive as viable, he decided he was going to force God to reply to him by seeking out this medium who would conjure Samuel from the dead and would allow him to talk to the prophet, allow him to,

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to seek God's wisdom through that. Besides repentance and doing what God has instructed him clearly, Saul didn't have any other options, but repentance never seems to be an option for Saul. Saul decides to seek out this medium.

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Now a medium claimed to be able to conjure up and to consult the spirit of a dead person. And so Saul was going to this demonic person, this occultic influence, looking to them to help him drag Samuel back from the grave so that he could consult Samuel, so that he could ask Samuel what he should do.

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Saul, in whatever, I don't know how this thought crosses his mind, but he's sitting there maybe laying in bed one night thinking, I've tried all the things God has spoken through in the past, maybe I'll go to the occult and they'll help me get God's attention and somehow help me find what God wants me to do.

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That seems strange at best, doesn't it? To use what God has clearly, explicitly told him not to do, not to allow in Israel that God's people don't practice this. Saul decides, well, maybe I'll just go give it a try.

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Yes, it is just as foolish as it sounds, but in this moment Saul violates even his own shallow understanding of God's laws to make this final step, this final step in his downfall. First Chronicles chapter 10 kind of summarizes this moment for us, looking back on it from later years.

55:12

First Chronicles 10 says that Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord and that he did not keep the command of the Lord. He also consulted a medium seeking guidance, but he did not seek guidance from the Lord.

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Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David, the son of Jesse. I guess I should have told you there was a spoiler alert in there. We needed to be aware, Saul's about to die.

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We're gonna see that in the coming weeks. We're gonna see the kingdom handed over to David, as has been talked about for months at this point. But after finding this person, Saul's servants, they go find this medium.

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And as Saul goes and consults this woman, Saul had some convincing to do, didn't he? You remember that as we were reading through the story, he shows up and says, knock knock knock, I hear that you're a medium.

56:01

She goes, uh-uh, nope, nope, I don't know who you are. I've never met you before, but that's illegal, right? I don't do that. Nobody here. Even though she doesn't recognize him at first, she knew that she needed to be careful.

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What he was asking her to do was illegal. In fact, it was punishable by death. So Saul has some convincing to do, but through time, through whatever means, he assures her that nothing bad is going to happen to her.

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In fact, he actually swears on the name of the Lord that nothing bad will happen to her for this thing that she does. That seems ironic, doesn't it? But he convinces her to conduct this seance where she's going to confer with the dead.

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She agrees eventually to do this for him and so Saul instructs her to to summon Samuel. You know upon seeing Samuel coming up out of the ground she's convinced that he's a god. It tells us that she gasped, that she's surprised by how he comes or or what he looks like or whatever it may be.

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Samuel clearly appears differently than anyone else that she had ever witnessed in these moments in her previous experiences. Samuel appears outside of her normal routine or outside of her normal power which seems to me to indicate that this ultimately wasn't her power that conjured Samuel but that God had sent Samuel for one final message to come to Saul and to warn him of what's going on.

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I believe God sent Samuel and many scholars believe looking at this that this is a similar interaction that this is a similar appearance to the way that Moses and Elijah showed up with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

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You may remember that where Moses and Elijah show up in glorified beaming bodies and and the radiance of heaven is somehow being reflected through their physical appearance through the visual appearance of these men.

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Whatever it may be this medium is surprised by Samuel's presence, surprised by his appearance and she realizes in an instant, wait no you're King Saul and I'm in a bad spot. I don't want to be here and magically she disappears from the narrative that she's just gone as we see now Saul and Samuel begin to interact with one another.

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That the second point of our outline the second section that we see here is now Samuel visits Saul in verses 15 through 19. As Saul now they're speaking with Samuel first he humbles himself before Samuel but then he immediately begins to try to justify his actions to Samuel.

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Samuel comes up out of the ground. I don't know what Samuel was up to in the afterlife at that point, but he seems annoyed that he's here. Saul, what are you doing? Why am I here? And it seems to me that Saul starts to try to justify himself, saying, no, no, no, the end justified the means of using this medium to reach out to him.

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You know, I just, I really needed to talk to somebody. I'm greatly distressed. Don't worry about her. Don't worry about how I did it. I just needed you. I needed God, and God's not responding to me. So here you are, Samuel.

59:12

You know, as I've pointed out several other times with Saul throughout this series, I want to pause right here, and I want you to look for just a second and notice that there's something that doesn't show up in Saul's pursuit of God, something that doesn't show up, that's kind of glaringly missing from

59:32

Saul's response as he comes to God and says, God, I need your help. What's missing? What do we see from David in the times where David sins and we see that David's flaws are pointed out to him, David responds with repentance.

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Meanwhile, Saul shows up and he just says, why won't you talk to me? He's almost agitated at Samuel saying, God won't give me what I'm asking for. He won't give me

what I need but there's no repentance, there's no acknowledgement of wrongdoing. Saul's only comment is, it's God's fault that I'm here.

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Seems to be blaming God for the fact that God won't listen to him, that Saul has rebelled and disobeyed time after time after time, but there's zero ownership or consideration of why God has turned his back on King Saul.

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Saul is just annoyed that God's not showing up as the magic genie. He rubbed the lamp just like he was supposed to and somehow God's not there to save him in his time of need. So Samuel responds to Saul's request, but unfortunately for Saul it's not the way that he wanted to hear a response from Samuel because Samuel offers this scathing rebuke of Saul's ignorance, of Saul's disobedience.

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Samuel's reply is basically, hey, you're mad that God doesn't talk to you. What do you want me to do about it? Okay, I'm here. You drug me up out of whatever good nap he was having or whatever fun he was into in the afterlife, but Saul, what would you have me do about this?

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God has become your enemy and it's your fault. This is your doing, Saul. Saul, you should stop expecting help from God because God is not coming to rescue you anymore. God's punishment had been made very clear to Saul.

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Samuel looks at Saul and he essentially says, Saul, you know how this story ends. I've told you time and time again. God has made it very clear. Verse 17 Samuel says it again. Saul the Lord has torn the kingdom from your hand and is giving it to David.

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Saul is informed that Israel was going to suffer a great defeat at the hands of the Philistines the next day. Not only would they be defeated, but Saul and his sons were all going to die on the same day on the field of battle.

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Saul's circumstance is this looming judgment that Samuel is pronouncing to Saul as the product of Saul's past disobedience. Samuel is echoing what was said in 1 Samuel 15, all the way back the first time that God had instructed Samuel to pass this along to King Saul.

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1 Samuel 15 verse 19 says, Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord? And the rest of that discussion Samuel tells Saul, no, no, Saul, God is going to be done with you one day.

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The kingdom is going to be taken from your hand, is going to be ripped from your lineage, and God is going to choose another king to come and to lead his people. Saul, why didn't you just obey what God had commanded?

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Now that you've chosen your path, now that you've made your bed, you need to lie in it. Don't act surprised when God promised you what was going to happen. What you knew was going to happen ultimately comes to pass and happens.

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Samuel kind of lays into King Saul a little bit, but now in the last few verses of our passage we see Saul's downcast departure. Saul seemed to be desperately hoping that what we all knew to be true wasn't true, but it was.

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Samuel reinforces, Saul, you know what's going to happen. God had clearly told Saul that his days as king were numbered, and in spite of that, Saul continued to do things his way, continued to think that he and his own selfishness, that in his own wisdom, that Saul was going to do what Saul wanted to do.

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Saul was for Saul. Saul was not serving God in those moments. Saul was simply focused on what Saul wanted to accomplish, what Saul wanted. But God had had enough. But God was over it, and Samuel's declaring to Saul, Saul, the time is up.

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This pronouncement of woe, this pronouncement of judgment that Samuel had offered years earlier is pronouncing again here in this moment, it's time for that to come true. It's time for Saul's demise to finally come.

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What Saul had come to endure hoping to hear that day, that wasn't true. what he heard. It was not spoken as he had an opportunity to speak to Samuel. God is not coming. Reinforcements are not on the way.

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God will not rest rescue you. Even worse, Saul finds out that tomorrow is his last day before he leaves this life and enters into the next. His sons were going to experience the same judgment that not only would one of his sons, not only would a couple of his sons, but his sons.

01:04:59

It says, in completeness, all of his sons are going to be killed in tomorrow's impending battle as well. Saul's line is going to end in the battle that's coming. It tells us here, best I can tell, it tells us that Saul's knees go weak, that he fell at once full length on the ground.

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It seems to me that he faints or passes out whatever is going on here, but what we see next in these final few verses, I can't decide if it's kindness or self-preservation. But the medium there in Endor shows back up on the scene, and she seems to show kindness to King Saul in this moment.

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She encourages him to get up, and she sets him up, and she begins preparing food for him, encouraging him to eat that he needs his strength. It's possible that in those moments that that was motivated by compassion.

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It's also possible that this medium, who's illegally residing in Israel, didn't want the attention of the King of Israel dying on her living room floor, and all the eyes that that was going to bring to her and to her house.

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But regardless of her motivation, she convinces Saul to eat. She has prepared this meal for him at great personal cost to herself, but in killing this fattened calf that she had, she prepared a meal that was fit for a king.

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She offers this meal to Saul and to his men, and it tells us that after Saul and his men ate, they rose and went out that night. Saul had come in to this woman's home seeking hope, but he leaves with nothing but angst and dread.

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Knowing what was coming the next day, he was left to face his inevitable demise. He knows that tomorrow is going to be the end for him, and so we come to the end of this strange little story interjected into the middle of this narrative in 1 Samuel.

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What we encounter this week is a story that, as best as I can tell, it doesn't feel like it fits in the Bible, does it? We read this, and it sounds like something that they might make a movie about it or have a little scene in a show or something like that, but it doesn't feel like it fits here.

01:07:09

This doesn't make any sense to me. The King of Israel, God's people who had driven the occult out of Israel and following God's instructions conducts a séance, okay that seems problematic, to seek the advice of a dead prophet who was going to say exactly what God had already told King Saul.

01:07:31

It kinda serves as a fitting nail in the coffin to Saul's story don't you think? Kind of brings summary, brings conclusion to a story that had started with such promise and has

spiraled into such horror. Saul's persistent disobedience was proof that he was never truly a child of God best I can tell.

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It can be difficult for us to perceive at times because he's not always aggressively opposed to God like some others are throughout history but but Saul's religion is a token religion at best. There was no meaningful transformation in Saul's life, there was no life change in Saul's responses.

01:08:13

Saul would engage in outward acts of religious obedience he would do the thing or say the thing that he was supposed to say when it seemed right to him, when it was convenient, when it was self-serving, when there was a battle that needed to be won or a people group that needed to be won over.

01:08:32

He would say and do the right things, but when you examine his actions, his self-centeredness, his rebellion to God's commands were clear. He would only obey God's instructions when it was self-serving, when there was a benefit to Him.

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I think many of us are tempted here, we see this in Saul, we see this behavior and we sort of shake our heads and go, why doesn't Saul get it? What is Saul's problem? Why is it so difficult for him to just acknowledge that God is God and to be obedient to what God has instructed, but be careful.

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He who is without sin in this issue should cast the first stone, because I think if we pause and we think about it, uh-oh, many of us do the same thing sometimes, don't we? Many of us respond in the same way.

01:09:23

In our American church culture, there's often a temptation to say the right things, to make sure that we look the right way so that we can get what we want, but God is not in the business of making Sunday morning attenders who deny Him Monday through Saturdays.

01:09:42

The words that God uses to describe Himself in relationship to His people, they're words like king, they're words like Lord, that word that means boss or master. God expects to be Lord or king in your life at all times.

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Jesus, specifically talking about this in Luke chapter nine says, Jesus said to all, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow after me. I think Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday, all the rest of them are included in daily, right?

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God does not require perfect obedience of us. We know that to be true. God is a God of forgiveness and mercy and God forgives far more than he ever should if we're looking for fair. But while God doesn't desire perfect obedience, doesn't require perfect obedience.

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We certainly should desire it. We certainly should strive towards that. You know, the flaw that we see in Saul's, say the right thing, but then do what I want, religion. The problem that we see there is that it hits dangerously close to the same religion that we see in the American church today.

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Say the right thing, look the right way, make sure that you put on the right show at the right time with the right people, but then we just go do what we want. I look around the room. I don't know you well enough to make that determination.

01:11:16

I don't know you well enough to know. I see you on Sundays, right? It always looks good on Sundays. I can't determine whether that's you or not, but I would ask you to pause here for just a minute. Let's let the wait of this moment just sit for a minute.

01:11:32

Does that describe you? Does the danger that we see in and King Saul's regular disobedience only to coming only coming to God when he needs something. Does that describe you? Does that describe your response when life gets hard, you come running, but then when things get ironed out, you go, no, no, no, God, back in the closet you go, I'll let you know when I need you.

01:12:03

Is there any sign of King Saul's external religion in your life? Somebody followed you around, made a documentary, and recorded every moment of every day and we rolled it out here. Where do you think the votes would land?

01:12:24

What we're going to see from David in 2 Samuel tells a very different story than what we see here from King Saul in 1 Samuel. David's not going to be perfect. David actually blows it pretty extravagantly in several different places throughout the story.

01:12:43

David's not perfect by any stretch, but what David does that Saul doesn't is that David models repentance. That David says, no, no, no, not my way, God, but I do things your way. So for us, leaving here this morning, I would ask you the question.

01:13:02

What percentage of your life what percentage of your actions belongs to to God? How much of your life is God actually king over in your life? Because when we reach a moment where God doesn't immediately give us what we want do we just run off and go like Saul did and just find whatever means necessary to to accomplish what we think we deserve in life? Do you turn to whatever alternative method to get what you want the way that Saul did? Or do we trust that when When God has said

01:13:33

do this, do we stay the course? Do we trust God's word? Do we trust God's commandments when He tells us to do something? Do we do it? Do we trust it even when it's hard? Even when it's inconvenient? Even when it doesn't make any sense to us?

01:13:50

We can look at something and go, I don't get it. But in that moment do we respond and say, yeah, but God told me and so I trust him. God's word is sufficient. One of the things that that we hold to as a church, that we hold to as a Christian faith is that God has spoken and that when God has spoken on something that that settles the issue.

01:14:14

When God has said do this He means do this and if He hasn't given you a time or an instance or a reason not to do it what He means is do this. Period. Closed book, issue resolved and done. When God says, don't do this.

01:14:36

Same thing. Yeah, but I don't really like that. Okay? But God has spoken. And God knows better than we do. And God's more comprehensively wise than little old me or little old you. And so if God has spoken and said, no, no, no, this is better.

01:14:56

Yeah, but I don't like it. That's one option, how King Saul would respond, but if we believe that the Bible is sufficient, if we believe that God has spoken, when God speaks on an issue, the issue is settled.

01:15:12

Our job is simply to obey. Don't fall into the trap that King Saul fell into. Don't fall into this, I'm going to seek self-serving options instead of just doing what God has clearly instructed. Now there's spaces where we can argue over, yeah, but what about this and what about that?

01:15:31

I'm not talking about those things. There's a lot of things that the Bible says very clearly, there is no debate about them, that we're still not doing. Let's start there, then we can get to the end.

01:15:42

Once we've got that nailed, then we can deal with the things that we can argue about and disagree about. And well, what about and what, you know, let's just start with, love your neighbor as you love yourself.

01:15:52

Let's just start with husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. Let's just start with, do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Maybe we just start with those clearly explicit things, then we'll work to the more complex as we get those figured out.

01:16:10

Are you going to view your Christian faith the way that Saul did, when it suits me. Or are you going to view your faith the way that God describes, the way that Jesus described in Luke chapter 9? He said, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow after me.

01:16:34

Our prayer team is going to be down here after the service is over. They would love to pray with you about whatever is going on. We've got our prayer wall back there. You can email prayer at rockcc.com.

01:16:42

Let us pray with you about whatever it is that's going on in your life. But at this time I just want to invite you. Would you pray with me now? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this story that we see with King Saul and this medium, this strange exchange that we

01:16:59

see between these two in 1 Samuel 28. God, we look at those things and it's easy for us to go, but what was he thinking? And then if we'll slow down and we'll consider our own lives, I dare say that sometimes if we looked at our lives and our decision with the clarity that we have in Saul's life, we would ask our ourselves what were we thinking?

01:17:29

God help us to be people who are obedient to your commands regardless of their convenience. God, we know that your way is ultimately best, and that even if we don't see the better or the best that is coming in the future, we know that when you have instructed us on something that your way is best.

01:17:49

God, give us faith to trust what you tell us and strength to obey what you have commanded. Father, we love you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.