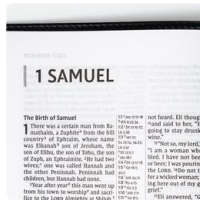


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1 Samuel 26 - 28



1 Samuel - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg discusses 1 Samuel chapters 26-28. He reflects on the story of Saul and David, highlighting the importance of respecting those anointed by God and the dangers of seeking guidance from mediums. Gregg also touches on the topic of hearing from God, emphasizing that it is not always about receiving a specific message but rather understanding and following what has already been revealed.

Transcript

Okay, we're in 1 Samuel chapter 26. Back with the Ziphites again. Now, the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, Is David not hiding in the hill of Hekelah, which is opposite Jeshimon? And Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

Now, this is starting to sound familiar. Saul has said earlier that he would not pursue David anymore, but he is not a man to be counted on to keep his word. And Saul encamped in the hill of Hekelah, which is opposite Jeshimon, by the road.

But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come. So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped.

And David saw the place where Saul lay. And Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army, now Saul lay within the camp, and the people encamped all around him. So, at night, David's spies had brought back word where Saul and his armies were encamped.

Apparently, the sentries were fallen asleep or something, and Saul was sleeping in the midst with all the people around him. So he felt protected, out on the battlefield, sleeping out under the stars, because his general, Abner, was right next to him. And all the armies were encamped around him, so for someone to get to him, they would have to get through quite a lot of sleeping soldiers.

But apparently, that was possible. God allowed David to do this anyway. David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped.

And David saw the places where Saul lay. Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army, now Saul lay within the camp, as we said, with the people encamped all around him. Then David answered and said to Abimelech the Hittite, excuse me, the Hittite, and to Abishai, the son of Zeruah, brother of Joab, saying, who will go down with me to Saul in the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with you.

Abishai was a courageous man, like his brother Joab. It would be very courageous to go down there where a camp would normally have sentries, and you're going down right into the midst of 3,000 armed men who are there to capture you and kill you, and you're going to go down where you can easily be caught. But Abishai's a very loyal follower with David, as was Joab, although Joab acted on his own sometimes later on and made David angry at him, but he was still very loyal to David.

And so David and Abishai came to the people by night, and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. So, I mean, something had happened to the sentries.

Then Abishai said to David, God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now, maybe David and Abishai took out the sentries. It's hard to say.

They didn't do any harm to Saul, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't do anything to the sentries. Somehow they got past them. And Abishai said to David, God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day.

Now, therefore, please let me strike him at once with a spear right to the earth, and I will not have to strike him a second time. And David said to Abishai, do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? David said, furthermore, as the Lord lives, the Lord shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed, but please take now the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, and let's go.

Now, David's attitude is a good one to mark and to take note of, because he had promises from God that he was, in fact, going to be the next king. Saul was murderous and deserved to die. David had every right to kill him, in a sense, had every right to kill him.

I mean, he was, in a sense, defending his own life. It's in self-defense. This man's coming out to kill him.

And so, for David to kill him would be entirely justifiable in the sight of almost any person's ethics. But David was pious, and he could not forget that God had anointed Saul, and he felt that killing Saul would be an offense against God himself. And so David said, well, God will take him out in whatever way he wants to.

I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to bring about the fulfillment of God's promises to me by my own hand. I'm going to let God do that in whatever way he wants to do it.

And so, leaving things in God's hands, even though he knows what the prophesied outcome is supposed to be, he will not do anything to make it happen. He's going to let it happen in God's time, though it would seem that he could hasten it right now. If he killed Saul and put a sword to the neck of Abner, then there'd be no one to withstand him in the army.

Everyone would follow him. He could have gotten away with it, but he didn't. He wouldn't do that.

He wanted to leave the matter to God to do in God's own time. Now, this idea of not touching or harming God's anointed one has been, I think, this concept has been abused by church leaders many times. Because it's very common to hear leaders, when they are criticized, say, don't touch the Lord's anointed.

And that means them. Like they are the Lord's anointed and you are touching them by criticizing them. If you've never run into this phenomenon, then more power to you.

You haven't been around very much. Unfortunately, this is an extremely common thing for ministers to do. They say, I'm the anointed of God.

I'm the minister here. I'm the leader that God set up. And you just have to put up with it.

Don't criticize. Don't undermine me. Don't do anything to threaten my position or my leadership.

Because I'm the Lord's anointed and you should not touch the Lord's anointed. And they use David as an example. I mean, here's a king who is actually very wicked.

And no matter how bad he was, David wouldn't kill him, wouldn't touch him. And so ministers often use that to say, you know, if you don't agree with my leadership, just put up with it because I'm the Lord's anointed. After all, David wouldn't even kill Saul, who was a wicked man in leadership, because he was God's anointed.

But the application is not at all exact. For one thing, how do you know that you're the Lord's anointed? Did Samuel the prophet pour oil over your head? You know, well, you know, the denominational board laid hands on me and anointed me to be the minister. Well, who are they? Well, they get their authority.

Just because men have recognized you as a leader doesn't mean that God has recognized you as a leader. Maybe he has, maybe he hasn't. The anointing of God or the approval of God on a ministry has got to be seen in the integrity of that ministry itself.

It isn't from some hierarchy that laid hands on you. And where'd they get their authority?

Well, someone earlier laid hand on them. Well, where'd the first guy who laid hands on that chain of command go? Well, he just broke off from another church at one time and started his own movement.

So where did he get his authority to lay hands on people? Well, I guess he just assumed it. So why are we calling this man the Lord's anointed? He might be, and I do believe that many ministers are anointed by God. I believe God has, by his spirit, given gifts of leadership and gifts of teaching to certain pastors.

And we recognize that. But in saying don't touch him, in David's mouth that meant don't kill him. I would highly recommend that you don't kill your pastor.

But that's not the same thing as putting the man above criticism. David certainly criticized Saul. He wouldn't kill him, and he wouldn't touch him.

But he criticized him very severely. And, in fact, he even wrote psalms against him. So this idea you don't criticize the minister because he's the Lord's anointed and you don't want to touch the Lord's anointed.

Okay, well don't touch him. Fine. Whether he's the Lord's anointed or not, you can avoid touching him.

But there are people who should be tested in what they say and critiqued in what they say. And, unfortunately, there's this general sense of privilege that has thought to be attached to this office of pastor or of someone in the ministry. Well, if someone's in legitimate ministry and they're really ministering spiritual things to you, then appreciate it.

But just because someone holds an office doesn't make them God's anointed. Where do they hold an office? In a man-made organization called a local church. Yes, it's man-made.

Some man incorporated it. Some man started it. Was he led by God? Maybe.

Maybe not. That is undecided. You can't just assume because someone holds office in a church, meaning an organization that people started, that he is God's anointed.

Many people just assume if you're in an institutional church and you're the leader, then you're the guy. You're the leader. Everyone has to follow you.

There's nothing in the Bible to support that. So this example of David is certainly praiseworthy, but it's not a parallel to somebody refusing to criticize a pastor. And I'm not suggesting you should be critical.

I think we should probably give pastors a lot of grace. They carry a lot of real burden a lot of times. I'm not favorable to someone being just a gadfly pestering the pastor every

time he says something that's wrong.

But at the same time, a pastor should be glad to be corrected. That's the main thing I'm concerned about. I'm not alarmed to hear that pastors sometimes say things that are wrong.

I hear it all the time. I'm sure I say things that are wrong all the time. Every day in my lectures, I misspeak sometimes.

And you can come up and say, well, Steve, that wasn't right. You didn't say it right. Okay, that's not alarming.

The question is, what do I do with your criticism? If I say, who are you to criticize me? Don't you know who I am? You know, well, then, then you better be alarmed. You better run. And when you go to a pastor and say, you know, I'm not sure I agree with what you said.

And he says, where did you go to Bible college? You know, who ordained you? And there are pastors who have said that in response to criticism. And I mean, that's, that's time to run. That's time to run away from that church, away from that ministry.

He's not a man of God. A man of God wants to be corrected. So this idea, touch not God's anointed, that's used as sort of a sense of giving a minister immunity from criticism.

Absolutely an abuse of this concept of this text. I would agree. Don't kill him.

Don't kill your pastor. But criticizing him is not out of bounds. Verse 12.

So David took the spear and jug of water that by Saul's head and they got away. No man saw it or knew it or awoke for they were all asleep. Here we go.

A deep sleep from the Lord had fallen on them. Apparently even, I think we should assume this applies to the centuries, not just the soldiers. Then David went over to the other side and stood on the top of the hill of far off, a great distance between them.

And David called out to the people and to Abner, the son of Nersene. Do you not answer Abner? Then Abner answered and said, who are you calling out to the king? And David said to Abner, are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your Lord, the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the Lord, your Lord, the king. This thing that you have done is not good as the Lord lives.

You are worthy to die because you have not guarded your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is. And the jug of water that was by his head.

Then Saul knew David's voice and said, is that your voice, my son, David? And David

said, it is my voice, my Lord, O king. And he said, why does my Lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done and what evil is in my hand? Now, therefore, please let my Lord, the king, hear the words of his servant. If the Lord has stirred you up against me, let him accept an offering.

But if it is the children of men, may they be cursed before the Lord. For they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, go serve other gods. Now, therefore, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord.

For the king of Israel has come out to seek a fleet. That's when one hunts a partridge in the mountain. Now, he first spoke to Abner because Abner, of course, was the one most responsible for the king's protection.

And in any army, in almost any age, if a sentry falls asleep, it's their life. I mean, that's just one of the few things that's not, there's a zero tolerance in any army of sentries falling asleep. And so clearly, Abner really was worthy of death.

Of course, the Lord had put a deep sleep on him, so it wasn't really Abner's fault per se. But David was telling the truth. He says, you know, Abner, you allowed someone to come in and endanger the king's life when you were on guard, when you were the one supposed to be protecting him.

You deserve to die. Well, Abner was dumbfounded, apparently, and didn't even answer back, but the king did. And so a conversation between David and Saul began.

And David says the same kinds of things to him that he said before. You know, I'm not a threat to you, obviously. I had the opportunity to kill you and I didn't.

So would you stop hunting me? And then Saul said, I have sinned. Return my son David, for I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed, I have played the fool and erred exceedingly.

And David answered and said, here is the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and get it. And David was not going to toss it to him.

That could easily be perceived as an act of aggression. They were trying to make it very clear. He's totally harmless.

So let one of your young men come and get it from me and bring it to you. May the Lord repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness. For the Lord delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed.

And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the Lord and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. Then Saul said to David, may you be blessed, my son David. You shall both do great things and also

shall still prevail.

So David went his way and Saul returned to his place. Now Saul had said, come on home, David. I won't hurt you anymore.

But David, of course, knew better than that. Saul probably meant it at the moment. You can see how Saul, in his lucid moments, was quite willing to admit that he was a fool and that he was evil and that he was wrong.

Not everyone will do that, even, I mean, in their ordinary state of mind, not everyone's going to quickly say, I was a fool, I was evil. You know, I deserve to die. You deserve to be the king instead of me.

And when Saul was kind of not under the influence of the evil spirit, he was capable of humbling himself rather profusely, I guess we could say, but the trouble is he was as unstable as water. You couldn't count on him. And so he had his moments where he felt very humbled.

It's like a little bit like a drunkard, you know? I mean, sometimes when you're witnessing to drunkards in the gutter and stuff, they're blubbing, they're repentant, and they seem to really be broken over their sin, but you just can't count on them. They're going to do it again. And so it's not just that a man says the right words, he's got to amend his ways, which Saul never really did, although he said he was going to at this point.

Now chapter 27, and David said in his heart, now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. And this is a strange thing to be thinking at the very moment that Saul has vowed publicly that he won't pursue anymore, but David knows you can't count on that. So he says, there's nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines, and Saul will despair of me to seek me anymore in any part of Israel, so I shall escape out of his hand.

Saul was not likely to invade the Philistine cities if David could find shelter among them. The Philistines sometimes were able to be defeated, but it was never sure that they could be, and Saul would be a fool to try to just start up a war with them by invading their territory. So David felt like that's the safe place where Saul will not dare to come.

So David arose and went over with the 600 men who were with him into Achish, the son of Maach, the king of Gath. Now, Achish was also the king of Gath when David went and drooled, unless this was the son, who might have had the same name. There could be easily more than one Achish.

And it doesn't seem likely that Achish would have favored David as he does on this occasion if he was the same one who had been convinced that David was mad previously. So this might not be the same Achish, but it's the same town. Could be the successor of the previous one.

And it says, So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam and the Jezreelites, and Abigail the Carmelites, Nabal's widow. Now, it's hard to know whether the 600 men with David had had their wives and children with them. I've been saying all along that they had to leave their families.

Certainly, I've not pictured David and 600 men with their wives and children in tow, fleeing from the armies of Saul. Though perhaps that's how it was. Maybe these men who came down to David brought their families with them.

I was assuming that they had fled alone. But it's possible they did flee to David alone. But later, at this time, when they were going to be moving into a city and not running through the woods, that they went and summoned their families and got them to come to them.

It's not clear. But now we have their whole households together, moving into houses and such in Gath. Now, why did Achish allow this? I mean, Achish, the Philistine king, should have thought, well, this is David who killed Goliath.

This is our enemy. But obviously, since David was being pursued by Saul, and it was clear that David was now considered to be Saul's enemy, that the Philistines assumed that David would be Saul's enemy too, like they were, and so that he'd be their ally against Saul. What they didn't know was that David didn't consider himself to be the enemy of Saul.

David had to act like he was in order to get the confidence of the Philistines. But David really was not the enemy of Saul. He knew Saul was his enemy, but David was not interested in fighting Saul or hurting Saul or doing anything, playing the role of an enemy to Saul.

But it was credible. The Philistines knew that Saul was hating David, and that David probably, therefore, would hate Saul. And therefore, it was possible for David to deceive them into thinking that he was anti-Saul, and therefore anti-Israel.

That worked for David. And he actually got to stay sort of among the Philistines until Saul died, as it turned out, although David had other troubles during that time. Okay, so it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he sought him no more.

So there were no more pursuits of David by Saul. Then David said to Achish, If I have now found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country that I may dwell therefrom. Why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you? So Achish gave to him Ziklag that day.

Therefore, Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. Since David became king, and all the kings of Judah were his descendants, this city belonged to him, although

it was in Philistine territory. That's the point that's been made here.

I mean, of course, all the cities of Israel were under the control of the Judean kings after David became king. But this city was among the Philistine cities, and it was deeded permanently to the kings of Judah after David died. It had been his.

Now the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months. And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Gerizites, and the Amalekites. For those nations were the inhabitants of the land of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt.

Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned to and came to Achish. Now these were among the people that were supposed to be exterminated in the days of Joshua and had not been. So David felt justified in carrying out that commission that had not been carried out in the days of Joshua to go into the cities of the Amalekites and these others and just basically do the thing that Joshua was doing in his day, but which had not gotten finished in the days of Joshua.

So to just wipe out every person in the city was also necessary so that no report could come from the city back to Achish. David was going to report to Achish that he and his men were doing expeditions against Israelite cities. And he didn't want word of what he was really doing ever to get back to Achish because he was really not fighting Israelites.

He was fighting enemies of Israel. And he couldn't leave any survivors to bring the report back so that his story could stand. Now things like this might make us not very fond of David.

Technically, David was in the right to do it because these people were on God's list to be taken out. Although he, you know, David does a lot of lying and so forth in his stories. He fakes and he lies and so forth, which are of course what often happens when you're at war or when you're trying to stay alive.

I'm not saying it's okay. I'm not saying that lying is a policy for Christians to adopt. The Bible does not suggest that everything David did is something for Christians to imitate.

Not at all. David did a number of things that are wrong. But whether he was really wrong in these cases or not, I don't know how God felt about it.

We don't really know how much God was holding people's feet to the fire about telling the strict truth about things done in war. I don't know. It's not true that all's fair in love and war.

But some aspects of war do involve secrecy at least. And I don't know to what degree God expected David to be more honest with Achish, for example, about something like

this. Anyway, whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, it says.

And it says in verse 10, then Achish would say, Where have you made a raid today? And David would say, Against the southern area of Judah, or against the southern area of the Jerahimites, or against the southern area of the Kenites. Now the southern area of Judah and these others would have been probably in the territory of Israel, which would mean that Achish would assume that David was running raids on Israelite towns that were loyal to Saul. But he wasn't.

David would save neither man nor woman alive to bring news to Gath, saying, Lest any should inform on us, saying, Thus David did. And so was his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. So Achish believed David, saying, He has made his people utterly abhor him.

Therefore he will be my servant forever. So Achish believed that David was raiding Israelite cities and therefore making Israel hate him. And therefore sealing his alienation from Israel so that he'd be loyal to Achish.

And to tell you the truth, Achish's view of David and seeing David as an asset to him might have been the same as Israel would have felt if Goliath had come over to Israel's side. You know, he's a champion. And David was Israel's greatest champion.

And now he's on the side of the people of Gath. This is a real asset to them as long as they could be convinced that he was loyal to them and not to Israel. And that was the ruse that David had to maintain.

He had to keep the Philistines convinced that he was really on their side and against Saul. Of course he was not. And that was put to the test very dangerously for David a little later when the Philistines were actually marching against Saul and David had to act like he wanted to go fight against Saul with them.

And fortunately the Philistine lords didn't agree to let him go. But Achish trusted him and yet he was released from that because of the distrust of the other lords. That's a good thing because David in his keeping up the show of being loyal to the Philistines almost was pressed into service to fight against Saul which he would never have done.

I mean, he wouldn't fight against Saul when he was running from Saul. He certainly wouldn't join the Philistines and go and fight against Saul. But this is the double life that David was leading among the Philistines.

Chapter 28. Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war to fight against Israel. And Achish said to David, you assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men.

And David said to Achish, surely you know what your servant can do. And Achish said to David, therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever. David's answer is a little bit evasive.

You know what your servant can do, you know. Well, yeah, but that doesn't really say which side David is on. Now Samuel had died and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city.

And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land, which was actually a good thing to do. For some reason Saul was concerned to get rid of the occultists in the land. Then the Philistines gathered together and came and encamped at Shunem.

So Saul gathered all Israel together and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him either by dreams or Urim or by the prophets.

Now the Urim would be the Urim and the Thummim. It sounds like he consulted them and he got no answer. Although I'm not sure how that would be.

If the Urim and the Thummim was simply a matter of pulling rocks out of a bag, it shouldn't be hard to pull a rock out of a bag. It's possible, he was saying, that because the Urim and the Thummim were now in the ephod with David, with Abiathar the priest, that there was no Urim and Thummim for him to consult. He couldn't get a word from the Lord through any of the normal ways that kings would normally do so.

He didn't have any dreams. The prophets were not speaking to him. He didn't have the Urim to do it.

So he really had no access to any word from God. And Saul said to his servants, find me a woman who is a medium that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, in fact there is a woman who is a medium at Endor.

Now this is interesting because Saul had actually kicked all the mediums and all the occultists out of the country. But his men knew of one who was still practicing and yet she had to do it kind of underground because she would be prosecuted by law if she was caught. So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes and he went and two men with him and they came to the woman by night.

And he said, please conduct a seance for me and bring up for me the one that I shall name for you. And the woman said to him, look you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life and cause me to die? And Saul swore to her by the Lord saying, as the Lord lives no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.

Now she didn't know he was Saul, or maybe she did, but he was pretending like he wasn't Saul. He was in disguise. But when your head and shoulders taller than everyone else in the country, I'm not really sure how you maybe you tie your lower leg up against your thigh so you walk on your knees and have it all under your robe so you're a little shorter or something.

I'm not sure how he would disguise himself from being recognized. And she may have known it was him or suspected it was him. And so she answered like a good citizen, you know the king doesn't allow this kind of stuff.

What do you mean trying to get me to do something bad like that? I wouldn't do something like that. And he says, you won't be punished. Now, either that was him knowing that she knew he was the king and he was giving her immunity officially as the kings and you won't be punished.

Or else if he was keeping up the disguise and thinking that she would think he's someone else, he was just saying I won't report you so you get away with it. In any case, it's hard to know whether she knew it was him or not at this point. She acts indignant in verse 12 when she says, you're Saul, why'd you deceive me? But she may have known that earlier.

It's hard to say. Then the woman said, whom shall I bring up for you? And he said, bring up Samuel for me. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice.

And the woman spoke to Saul saying, why have you deceived me for you're Saul? And the king said to her, do not be afraid. What do you see? And the woman said to Saul, I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth. So he said to her, what is his form? And she said, an old man is coming up and he's covered with a mantle.

And Saul perceived that it was Samuel. And he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. Now of course the question often arises, was this really Samuel? This is a big controversy among Christians because it is generally believed among Christians that it is actually impossible to consult the dead through a medium.

Many Christians believe that once people are dead, they cannot communicate with the world above ground anymore. And therefore when people go to mediums and appear to be in contact with the dead, it's a deception. It's either a deception because the medium is herself a fraud or himself a fraud or else it's a demon impersonating the desired person.

Those who were mediums in the Bible were said to have a familiar spirit. That's the typical term in the Old Testament. Someone who has a familiar spirit.

That just means they're possessed by a demon. Some Christians believe that the term familiar spirit refers to a spirit that's familiar with the departed person that someone's

trying to reach. So that if you went to a medium to try to consult your grandfather who's dead, that a spirit who is actually familiar with your grandfather could come and impersonate him.

And you would of course think you're talking to your grandfather. It might even be possible for you and your grandfather to exchange information that was only known by him and it guarantees convinces you that it's really him because he knows things that only he would know if he was your grandfather. But according to the standard belief among most evangelicals, this isn't really your grandfather.

It's really a demon impersonating him. It's a familiar spirit and you could not really talk to your grandfather. Now in my opinion that probably is true much of the time because many times when people contact the dead and think they're talking to someone on the other side, the things they are told about the nature of life after death, about the nature of God, about the nature of ultimate reality, often they're wrong things.

They're often deceptions. They're the kind of things the devil would say, but why would grandpa say that? Why would grandpa lie to you? And so my guess is that the general view of evangelicals is probably correct at least in most cases. But there's certainly nothing in the Bible that says the dead can never contact the living.

It's just that the living are forbidden to try it. The living are forbidden to contact the dead. But that the dead can contact the living is never stated to be impossible.

It's true that the rich man in Hades asked Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his brothers. Whether he meant for Lazarus to rise from the dead or to go back as a ghost or something like that to warn his brothers, we don't know. But he was told that wasn't going to happen because his brothers already had the law and the prophets and did not need for someone to go back and warn them.

Actually, it would appear that having him rise from the dead is what was in view because Abraham said if they don't believe the law and the prophets, they won't believe if one comes back from the dead, which could mean just a haunting ghost or a person who rise from the dead. But we do read there in that story of a man in Hades wishing to have somebody go back from the dead and contact his brothers and warn them and he was denied his request. That's not the same thing as saying it can't happen.

The thing about this is that the Bible in telling the story all the way through assumes that it really is Samuel. That the person that Saul met here was really Samuel. And one of the things that seems to be a confirmation that is that Samuel in this exchange actually predicts that Saul will die in battle the next day, which did happen.

Samuel is a true prophet, but the demons would not necessarily know if that was going to happen. They don't know the future quite like that. And so my impression is we just

take this at face value.

I mean, look what it says. It says in verse 12 when the woman saw Samuel, it doesn't say when the woman saw the spirit and the author does not commit to whether it was really Samuel or not. Just so when she saw Samuel, the author of the book is committing to that being Samuel that she saw.

And it says in verse 15 now Samuel said to Saul and in fact all the way through it's the same way. Verse 16 then Samuel said. So the whole thing is said to be Samuel.

In fact, in verse 20 it says immediately saw fell full length on the ground and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. So the Bible actually says these were the words of the prophet Samuel. This was Samuel who appeared as difficult as it may be for us to understand why God would allow this to happen to send Samuel back.

If I don't think we have the luxury of saying it wasn't him unless we want to disagree with the Bible itself in its plain statement. Now of course the question does rise why would God allow Samuel to come back? Is it possible for mediums to contact the dead and bring them back up? I don't know if it's normally possible but even if it's not God apparently wanted to give this word to Saul. It was a word of doom.

Now what's interesting here is that Saul had tried the more legitimate ways of hearing from God. He wanted to hear from God. He inquired of the Lord but the Lord didn't answer him by dreams or by the urn or by prophets.

And so he said I'm going to go to a medium and get information that way. He wanted a word from God and the living prophet Samuel was dead so he wanted to get him alive again to talk to him again. But you see it might seem like it was almost virtuous of Saul in contemplating going to battle that he wanted to get a word from the Lord.

He wanted to know what God's will was. But God didn't want to talk to him. God had already rejected him.

And the man simply was trying to force God to speak to him. And God wasn't interested. God had nothing to say to him.

But when he went to the witch God did decide okay he's taken this step I'm going to go ahead and send Samuel back and prophesy one more time to him. But it won't be good news. And it wasn't for Saul.

But we can see that God can speak even through or can work even through a medium or through any kind of occultist. That doesn't mean it's okay. God is simply sovereign.

He can operate through any means he wants to. He could speak through a Ouija board if someone's using one but that doesn't mean he would approve of them using one. God

can speak any way he wants to.

But there are things he forbids us to do and any involvement in the occult is forbidden by God. And I would believe that in most cases any messages you get through occult means are going to be deception. In this case God overruled the whatever familiar spirit might have normally operated through this woman.

That's why she was freaked out. She screamed when she saw Samuel. She didn't expect that.

Here she was conjuring up Samuel for a client. And when Samuel really showed up it freaked her out. She was terrified.

She didn't expect that. She expected something. She no doubt expected to collect her fee by convincing Saul that Samuel had come up but she didn't really expect to see Samuel himself.

This was an unusual case. Perhaps a unique case. And so Samuel said to Saul, verse 15, Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? And Saul answered, I am deeply distressed for the Philistines make war against me.

And God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore. Neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you that you may reveal to me what I should do.

Then Samuel said, Why then do you ask me seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy? In other words, if God's not answering you through prophets or dreams why do you think I'd want to come up and answer you? God is your enemy. You're his enemy. Why disturb me over this? You think I'm going to be amenable to this? And the Lord has done for himself as he spoke by me.

For the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, namely David. Because you did not obey my voice, the voice of the Lord, nor execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek. Therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day.

Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.

Now, he said you and your sons are going to be dead like me. Some people have wondered what he means by your sons and you will be with me. Because the assumption is that Samuel would be in heaven and Saul wouldn't go to heaven.

But of course this is not really talking about that kind of specificity of where Samuel was or Saul was after they died. What he means is you're going to be dead like me. You're going to be in your grave like I'm in my grave.

You're going to be in Hades, in Sheol. You're going to be where all dead people are. I'm dead and you're going to be dead.

That's what he's saying. You see, in the Old Testament the idea that someone went to heaven, someone went to hell was not really part of their frame of reference. There'd been nothing ever revealed about that.

But they did know that all people end up dead. And when they are dead they are believed to simply go to the generic place of the dead, Sheol. Good, bad, and indifferent all go there.

Everybody goes to Sheol when they die. And that's where Saul and his sons would be along with Samuel. Likewise, later on when we read of David talking about the death of his baby and the baby dies and David speaking about that later on says, I will go to him but he will not come back to me.

Many times Christians think this means, oh that proves the baby was in heaven because certainly David's in heaven. So when he said, I will go to him, he must mean that I will go to heaven where the baby is. And I don't have any doubt that the baby was saved or that David was saved but that's not what he would be thinking.

What he'd be saying is, I'm going to die like he is dead but he won't come back to life like I am alive. He's not going to come back into our realm of the living although I will go into his realm, the realm of the dead. And that's what Samuel is saying the same thing to Saul.

You're going to be with me. It's not in the sense that we're all going to be rejoicing together in the presence of God. It's rather, I'm dead and that's what you'll be tomorrow, you and your sons.

Then immediately Saul fell full length on the ground and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him for he had eaten no food all day or all night. And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled and said to him, look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice and I have put my life in my hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me.

Now therefore, please heed also the voice of your maidservant and let me set a piece of bread before you and eat that you may have strength when you go on your way. But he refused and said, I will not eat. But his servants together with the woman urged him and he heeded their voice so he arose from the ground and sat on the bed.

Now this is typical of Saul, taking a strong position and just going back on it. Nope, I'm fasting, I'm not going to eat anything, you can't persuade me. Well, if you insist, I guess I will after all.

I mean, it's like, I'm not going to pursue David anymore. David, you're safe, don't worry about it. And then he comes after him again.

I mean, Saul is as unreliable as can be. He, you know, he makes vows. Whoever eats anything today will be cursed.

And it's Jonathan. Okay, Jonathan, you'll have to die as the Lord lives. So, you know, as the Lord lives, you'll die, Jonathan.

The people say, what? You're going to kill Jonathan? He's a hero. Oh, I guess I won't then. You know, I mean, it's like Saul just is all, he's an incredibly unstable and unreliable man.

Even in this, I mean, his refusal to eat was no doubt a show of repentance or remorse as far as he was concerned, fasting, showing, you know, trying to get right with God. But he could be persuaded to go ahead and eat, as it turned out. Now, the woman had a fatted calf in the house.

It might seem strange that you'd have a cow in your house, but it's not unusual in the Bible. In the Bible, most people had an animal or two in their possession, and the animals did, the stable was in the house. This has been discovered through archaeology.

The houses in those days had an area that was raised a little more than the other, and you'd go down maybe a foot or so into a lower area, and then there's the exit to the house. And just inside the door, the animals were fed and kept at night inside the house. And then there's this raised area where the people lived in the same building.

So she had a cow in her house, and she hastened to kill it, and she took flour and kneaded it and baked unleavened bread from it. Just think how long that would take. Saul's been fasting all day.

She says, let me give you something to eat. Now, these days, you'd pull something out of the cupboard, out of the refrigerator and have something up in five minutes. She has to go slaughter a cow, drain out its blood, skin it, cook it, roast it, and go make some bread from scratch.

How long is that going to take? A little while anyway, but that's just how things were in those days. They didn't have the instant food and stuff. You'd say, oh, I've got a guest over.

Let me feed you. Just sit here for about five hours while I get it ready. It would be quite a time-consuming thing to prepare food from scratch, especially when you have to kill the animal before you cook it and dress it out and all that stuff.

So she brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night. And really, this is essentially the end of Saul.

There's a little more about him in Chapter 31 when he actually gets killed, and he dies in a very dishonorable manner, and his story is a tragic one. But he's a very conflicted man, obviously. He's a man who had some religious motions in his heart.

He had some real interest in pleasing God if it wasn't too costly to him, but he wanted to be able to do things his own way too. He was that way as he was about everything, unstable. He really wanted God to tell him what to do.

He really wanted to worship the Lord. He wanted to have God on his side. But he really wanted to do his own thing too, and he didn't want God to take him out of office.

He knew God was going to give the kingdom to David. Well, why didn't he just step down and say, David, I know that God wants you to have the kingdom. I'm abdicating.

I'm turning over the kingdom to you. I want the Lord's will. But that's not where he was at.

He was willing to kill David to prevent it from happening. So the man was like two men, poles apart from each other, bipolar. He was not bipolar in the sense that we speak of today, but he was a man who was as evil a man as you could get, and as remorseful and sometimes religious in his emotions as a man could get.

Now, his big mistake here, I just want to bring up as we close it, his big mistake in going to see a witch is really sort of a lesson to many of us today because many people want to hear from God, and God didn't want to say anything to Saul. And God didn't speak to him through any legitimate means, but he was not satisfied not to hear from God, so he just took, again, his own course and went to a witch so he could hear from God. He wanted to hear from Samuel, but he went in an illegitimate way.

He went to a medium to conjure up Samuel because Saul still saw himself as the one in control, even of his relation with God. God, if you won't speak to me this way, then I'm going to have you do it this way. If you won't do it that way, I'm going to make you speak to me, by golly, by hook or crook.

You're going to speak to me. And there are Christians who seem to feel that hearing from God is really like that, that you have, it's your choice to hear from God. And God doesn't really have the choice of whether he wants to speak or not.

You just, you can learn to hear from God. And it's very common to hear preachers say, you know, the voice of God is always speaking, but you just aren't listening. It's like radio waves are filling this room at all times, but if you tune the radio to the right frequency, you can hear them.

If you don't have your radio tuned in, the room is full of these messages, but you can't hear them. You're surrounded by the voice of commentators and musicians and

sportscasters and news reporters and so forth. There's all kinds of messages filling this room, but you don't know it because you don't have your radio tuned in.

And they say it's just like that with God. God's always talking. God's always speaking.

And you need to learn the techniques of tuning in, tuning your heart in so you can hear what he's saying. And so there are people who actually teach you how to hear from God. And there's like, you know, this many principles, this many steps to hearing from God.

And the whole assumption is you can hear from God when you want to. It's up to you to hear from God anytime. You just have to get down and do these steps, do these techniques, follow these principles, and you'll get a word from God.

And I've known people in schools and so forth that get together with others, and their whole goal is to hear from God, and they're all kind of expected to hear something from God. It's almost incumbent on them. I've actually had students come to me from YWAM who've said, you know, I think there's something wrong because whenever we have our intercessory programs, I don't get anything from God.

I think I'm doing something wrong. Because they're under the impression that if they do everything right, they'll get a word from God. But they don't realize that that mentality is very much like that of Saul, that God will speak, I just have to find the right way to get the word from him.

He wasn't willing to take no for an answer. If God didn't want to say anything, well, I'm still going to get something from God. But God sometimes doesn't have anything particular he wants to say to you that he hasn't already said.

What Samuel told him is the same thing that God had told him earlier, except for the new information that he's going to die the next day. But basically, Samuel didn't give any new information. Saul didn't need to go to the witch to get that information.

He had it from Samuel previously. He knew. And a lot of times God doesn't want to give us any new information because we're not heeding the information he gave us already.

If you're not hearing anything from God, it may be because he's not talking. And if he's not talking, it may be your fault or it may not be. It may be that there's just nothing particularly he needs to tell you right now other than what you can get right from reading the Bible from what you've already heard.

No. God isn't like the occult, where if you just learn the techniques, you can get revelations from the other side because they're always there and you're the one who decides to get them. When God spoke to people in the Bible, he spoke when he wanted to.

He came to Samuel or to the prophets whenever he had something to say. They didn't just conjure it up. You don't conjure up a word from God.

God's the one who takes the initiative in speaking. And he'll speak when he wants to. And often he speaks to people who aren't even trying to listen because he wants to get through.

They don't have to be doing anything. Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, he wasn't trying to get a word from God and Jesus appeared to him. This has often happened.

Peter wasn't just seeking a word from God on the rooftop when the vision came with the animals and the sheep. God knows who he wants to talk to and when he wants to speak and how he wants to do it. And he's the one in charge of that.

But you see, some people get the impression, oh, we're in charge of that. We can fix that. God's always speaking.

We just need to learn the technique and we'll hear his voice. The trouble is if we think that way, we will probably hear something. But it may not be God.

And it was just another part of Saul's rebelliousness that when God didn't speak to him in legitimate ways, he didn't just say, okay, Lord, if you don't have anything to say, I'll just live with that. He was determined to be in charge of the situation. I'm going to get a word from God no matter what, even if I have to sin.

Even if I have to disobey God to get a word from God, I'll go to a medium and do it. Of course, Christians don't have that attitude. But the attitude being, if God doesn't want to speak, I mean, the whole idea that God doesn't want to speak apparently is foreign to Christians.

There's times when he just doesn't have any special thing to say to you. And he just expects you to be faithful to what you know already. God will give you extra messages when he wants to.

Think of Paul and his companions on their second missionary journey. It says they tried to go into Asia, but the Holy Spirit forbade them. So they tried to go into Bithynia, and the Holy Spirit forbade them.

And they were trying to figure out where to go. And finally, it says one of the members of the team had a dream of a man from Macedonia saying, come over to Macedonia and help us. So they woke up and said, we think that's what God's saying.

We better go to Macedonia. But they had tried two other directions first. Why? Why didn't they just get a word from God about it and not waste their efforts? It's like they clearly did not have some technique that would get them a word from God whenever

they wanted one.

God speaks when he wants to. He finally gave them a dream because that's what he wanted to do. But before they had that dream and that guidance, they had to just kind of do trial and error.

I think Asia is a good place to go. No, I don't sense any peace about that. How about Bithynia? Let's go that way.

No, no peace about that either. So they're just trying to sit there waiting to see what God wants them to do. And God, in that case, took the initiative of giving them a dream to let them know.

But the fact that they struck out in two different directions first, and it wasn't God, it means that they certainly did not have some kind of a crystal ball that they knew how to tap into to get a word from God whenever they wanted to. God's a real person. He talks when he wants to talk.

He's not just an essence and some power that's out there like radio waves or static electricity or something that if you get the right mechanism, you can tap into it. Anyway, Saul, a very sad case. The saddest case of all is in chapter 31 when he dies.

But we have a couple of other chapters in between here of David's problems that he has with the Amalekites. And we'll take that and we'll take the rest of this book in our next session. .