

1 Samuel 28-29 SEEKING REFUGE

Good morning and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn to 1 Samuel 28? Last week we saw the shocking developments as David talked to his heart, and decided to live with the philistines. And that's where we pick up the scene in our study this morning.

Now there are a couple of sections in our study that are some of the most debated chapters in all the bible. For centuries theologians, scholars, academia have struggled to reconcile some of these verses. We'll spend some time talking about this as part of our study.

We're going to study both chapters 28 and 29, and these 2 chapters recount perhaps the darkest days in the lives of these 2 men who've been so intertwined, King Saul, and the future king, David.

The title of this morning's message is SEEKING REFUGE

Let's pray.

So remember, David, who God told will one day be king of Israel, fled Israel and is dwelling with Israel's arch enemy, the philistines...

1 Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men." David had lied to Achish, implying to the king that he raided the people of Israel. Now the philistine King says 'David we're going to war against Israel, and of course you and your 600 men are coming with us to fight.'

And what is David's response?

2 So 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.” There is a ton of debate regarding David at this point in his life. Is David really saying he will fight against Israel? Has he fallen that far? Or is David just continuing to spin his web of lies in order to stay in the good graces of this philistine King? Before you decide, we need to finish chapter 29...

But more importantly, let’s remember how David got to this place. He was facing increasing opposition from Saul, and David said in his heart, remember he talked with himself instead of God. Whenever we come up with a plan without seeking God's guidance, we may solve one problem, only to find ourselves creating a whole host of other issues.

Now in v3 the scene shifts away from David to what’s happening with Saul. Saul, king of Israel reaches new levels of madness.

3 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. If you remember, Samuel had been God’s prophet to Israel. For decades whenever God wanted to deliver a message to His people, God spoke through Samuel.

But Saul is about to desperately need guidance and Samuel is no longer around...

Now notice the setting at the end of verse 3-Saul put the mediums and spiritists out of the land. And at first this seems good right-God strictly prohibits these practices. So was Saul being obedient to God’s word when he cast them out of the land? No, he wasn’t.

Leviticus 20:27 ‘A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has

familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them.' ”

Once again – a trait indicative of Saul – the king fails to fully obey God. Remember partial obedience is disobedience!

Evidently in some sort of stand for righteousness, Saul removed from Israel all the witches and new age channelers, and palm readers, and fortune tellers, and astrologers - everyone who dabbled in the occult...

If Saul had obeyed God's word, and eliminated the occultists as God had commanded this sad chapter would've never happened.

Point is, Saul falls into the trap of his own partial obedience... and sadly he isn't the last.

For us today, things such as tarot cards, palm readers, horoscopes and Ouija Boards are modern attempts to practice spiritism. Even if they're being marketed as just innocent and fun, these are dangerous links to the demonic realm.

As followers of Christ, we're never to engage in anything that promises supernatural power or guidance yet excludes almighty God.

4 Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. Israel and the Philistines are about to go to war once again.

5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. If you remember when our study in 1 Samuel began, Saul once was a man of great courage. But as Saul continued to disobey God, the spirit of God fled from Saul, he lost his courage. Now we find the unrepentant king, gazing out

over the Jezreel valley, seeing the Philistines, and he's terribly scared-in the Hebrew it describes a quaking of a mountain.

6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. Saul sees the enemy, and is shook, and is in desperate need of divine guidance. He tries to pray - but the heavens are silent, and the prophet Samuel is no longer around to bail him out.

Sometimes folks will get to a place where they're praying and not hearing God at all. And the harsh reality is why do we expect God to continue to speak to us if we haven't obeyed what He's already told us?

Folks if heaven feels silent, if you feel like your prayers are being ignored, go back to the basics and see if there's something God has asked you to do that you haven't been obedient in.

Picture the scene. The prophet Samuel is dead, the Philistines are about to overtake him, he has no courage, he's reached out to God but heaven is silent.

Saul is desperate. It's scary how far desperation can drive a person...

7 Then 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 En Dor." En Dor, was in Philistine territory. There's a tradition that suggests this witch was the mother of Abner, Saul's general, which is why Saul's men knew exactly where to find one. Can't say for sure but interesting theory...

The Hebrew word for medium is obe, and it has the idea of "mumbling" or speaking with a strange, hollow sound — as if one were "channeling," with a dead person speaking through them.

8 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 I shall name to you." In his desperation Saul has just brought a curse upon himself. God said in **Leviticus 20:6: And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.**

But Saul knew exactly what he was doing, and that this was wrong. The king was so ashamed of his wicked actions he came to the witch in disguise. Saul shows up in costume. Call it, "the first Halloween costume."

Unrepented sins hidden in the heart will ultimately lead to abominable acts.

So Saul meets the witch at Endor undercover, and he asks her to channel the deceased prophet Samuel. **SHOW PIC** Now she's proly not the witch looking type we think of with the big hook nose and a wart. **CLOSE PIC**

Why Samuel? Saul wanted to know what God might say to him. How wrong is this line of thinking!! This is like going to a palm reader to hear the will of God.

9 Then 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, to cause me to die? Notice she didn't know she was talking to Saul...

10 And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." Saul's oath in the name of the Lord reminds us that spiritual phrases in of themselves mean nothing. Saul is in complete disobedience, yet calls on the name of Lord.

This is like planning to rob a bank, and then praying "Now Lord, help us to pull off this job successfully."

If it weren't so tragic it would be humorous. This is the last time he says Lord...he dies shortly after this.

11 Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

12 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 are Saul!" Now again this is a heavily contested area of scripture, for this brings up several questions...

Was this really Samuel, or was it a demon impersonating Samuel?

The woman, this witch at Endor, cries out with a loud voice, she's terrified at the sight of Samuel.

It is possible this was truly Samuel, and God allowed Saul a brief communication with Samuel. The only other time someone makes a post death appearance is on the Mount of Transfiguration when Elijah and Moses appear and talk to Jesus. But normally, this is forbidden.

Luke 16 reveals the travel rules for the dead. When the rich man in hell wants to return, and warn his lost brothers of the horrors that await them – God forbids him. Once you're assigned to heaven or hell there are no passes or furloughs.

13 And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?"

And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit^[fn] ascending out of the earth." Now there is a reality to the spirit world, there is a reality in spiritism, but we are warned by the Bible to stay away from that kind of stuff. Demons are real. **Acts 16 16 Now it**

happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." 18 And this she did for many days.

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

I think most psychics today are just really good at their craft of deception, but others absolutely tell people that which is not humanly possible to know, because they are possessed by a demon.

14 So he said to her, "What is his form?"

And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. Mantle-same word in 15:27 when Saul grabbed his robe and it tore. Samuel wearing a mantle.

This leads us to more questions.

Would God allow something He prohibits-this woman bringing up Samuel? What about Samuel-wearing the same garment, and he's still old?

If this isn't Samuel, and its a demon, why is the witch so freaked out?

Something else to consider, is we'll see that Samuel is about to speak is prophecy and 100% factual. Remember Satan gave scripture to Jesus but he mis-quoted it.

Is it a demon, is it Samuel? I don't know.

But I do know when we close our ears to God, He will find unusual and even uncomfortable ways to speak to us.

I experienced this many years ago. For 2 nights the Lord spoke to me in a dream...

15 Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" These words imply that Samuel was at rest. Some say by Samuel saying bringing me up, speaking geographically it was hell, but that's not accurate. Jesus explained in the story of the rich man and Lazarus that before the finished work of Jesus on the cross, the believing dead went to a place of comfort and blessing known as Abraham's bosom. When Jesus finished his work on the cross, sin's penalty was paid for these believing dead and they were then ushered into heaven.

...15 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." What a sad state to be in...

16 Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? Samuel is going to mention the Lord 7 times in this conversation with Saul.

The test for any "spirit encounter" or "angelic revelation" is its faithfulness to God's word and God's character. Galatians 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

17 And the LORD has done for Himself[fn] as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. We saw this in chapter 15. Now note samuel's prophecy to Saul...

19 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 hand of the Philistines." Notice that Samuel never told Saul what to do, because it was too late to do anything. God's judgment was already in motion. Prior to this Saul had plenty of time to repent and get right with God, but now his time has run out.

The opportunity to repent is truly a gift from God.

And upon hearing his death sentence...

20 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. Being around death quite a bit as a young man, of course now as a pastor, and as a chaplain, I've learned when you do not fear the Lord, you fear death.

21 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. She doesn't want King Saul to kill her as a result of all of this. 22 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."

23 But he refused and said, "I will not eat."

So his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he heeded their voice. Then he arose from the ground and sat on the bed. It's a sad scene, Saul is like a man on death row having his last meal. But he needs to eat to get some strength so he can go fight against the philistines.

24 Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house, and she hastened to kill it. And she took flour and kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread from it. 25 So she brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night. Saul's fate is certain. The fate of his sons is also sealed. Saul, the once celebrated king of Israel, will die the next day.

Chapter 29 the scene shifts back to rebellious David.

1-2

1 Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel. 2 And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish. The Philistine army is preparing for battle against Israel, and the five rulers of the five Philistine city-states want to see a show of force. It's like a military parade. The Philistine Army marches in front of a packed grandstand. **SHOW PIC** Imagine, flags are flapping in the breeze. Horses are snorting. Swords are polished. At the end of the line is David and his men. **CLOSE PIC**

3 Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" Pause here... Here's an interesting question they ask. Even the heathen Philistines knew that David was out of place. It was odd to see David on the Philistine side of the field.

It's always a brutal moment when someone says "Hey, you're a Christian – what are you doing here?" Or "I thought you were a Christian." God can even use the wicked to rebuke believers.

...3 And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him since he defected to me." This would be like a wicked coworker insisting to others in the breakroom that you really weren't a Christian after all because they saw how you lived. What a brutal statement.

4-5

4 But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these men? 5 Is this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying:

'Saul has slain his thousands,

And David his ten thousands'?"^[fn] The Philistine leaders absolutely didn't trust David and they feared he would turn against them in battle in order to get back into the good graces of Saul.

6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, as the LORD lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me.

Nevertheless the lords do not favor you. 7 Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines." David thought he couldn't be happy or at peace in the

land of Israel **1 Samuel 27:1 And David said in his heart, "Now I**

shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is 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.”

Now he finds that his “Philistine friends” won’t accept him either. David has no home; he is trying to live in both worlds, so he has no home in either world.

David was in the worst place for any child of God. He had too much of the world in him to be at peace in the LORD, and he had too much of the LORD in him to be at peace in the world.

8 So David said to Achish, “But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?” Another controversial, debatable verse. Is David sincere, or is this all a ruse? Is he really ready and willing to slay Hebrews, or is he just saying this so he can escape free and clear?

Either way, Could you imagine someone coming to David before David killed Goliath, and saying, “David, I don’t think you should kill Goliath, you might make the philistines upset.” What do you think David’s response would’ve been back then?

But all that is a distant memory in this time of backsliding and compromise for David.

Let’s finish the chapter...

9 Then Achish answered and said to David, “I know that you are as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, ‘He shall not go up with us to the battle.’ 10 Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master’s servants who have come with you.[fn] And as soon as

you are up early in the morning and have light, depart.” This is one of David’s lowest moments. A compromised follower of God is joyless follower of God.

11 So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel. The Valley of Jezreel – otherwise known as Armageddon is the most famous battlefield in the world. Many of history’s battles were fought in this valley - but the final battle between the Christ and the Antichrist will be fought in this same location... in Jezreel.

Matt 11 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Communion....

Luke 22:19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

And

Luke 22:20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.