

Heading For Disaster (1 Sam. 27-28)

David Leaves Israel Again (1 Sam. 27:1-4)

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.” 2 Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. 3 So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal’s widow. 4 And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more.

- David has a momentary lapse of faith.
- There are no Psalms credited to David from this period of his life.
- Once again David doesn’t seem to have sought God as he once did.
- Gath: a surprising choice of refuge. David is now very useful to Achish.

David’s Spoil And His Deception (1 Sam. 27:5-12)

5 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 there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?” 6 So Achish gave him Ziklag that day.

Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. 7 Now the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months. 8 And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. For those nations were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. 9 Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish. 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 Jerahmeelites, or against the southern area of the Kenites." 11 David would save neither man nor woman alive, to bring news to Gath, saying, "Lest they should inform on us, saying, 'Thus David did.' " And thus was his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. 12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever."

- The arrangement that David should receive Ziklag was very clever. Achish likely didn't care about, because it was remote for him. Ziklag was apparently on the way to the desert areas in the south.
- While David was there, other men started coming to him, including warriors from the Tribe of Benjamin (1 Chron. 12).
- David is lying to the king of Gath about his raiding.
 - Jerahmeel was a grandson of Judah.
 - The Kenites were relatives of Moses and had friendly relations with Israel.
 - The Amalekites were traditional enemies, of course, and the Geshurites had never been subdued by Joshua. The Girzites are unknown to us.

David's Dilemma (1 Sam. 28:1-2)

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." 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."

- The Philistines are massing themselves together for a major blow.
- Achish tells David he will need to fight for the Philistines. What will he do?

Saul's Final, Terrible Resolution (1 Sam. 28:3-7)

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. 4 Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. 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."

- Saul is desperate, and as the two armies are encamping in the region of the Valley of Jezreel, he is even more afraid than usual.
- Yahweh does not answer him by any of the typical ways.

- A beneficial thing Saul had done was eliminate the mediums and spiritists. Even this seems to have been one of his halfway measures, because the Torah had forbidden occult activity and demanded the death penalty for practitioners:
 - *9 “When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. 13 You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 14 For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you. (Deut. 18:9-14)*
 - *“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.” (Leviticus 20:27)*
 - Sins we don’t deal with can ultimately destroy us!
- Only the Israelite religion forbid occultic activity of this type.
- Despite Saul’s decree, his men have no trouble finding a witch.

Hiring A Witch (1 Sam. 28:8-14)

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.” 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?” 10 And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, “As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.” 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!” 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 ascending out of the earth.” 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.

- The woman was terrified, which makes us think this was indeed Samuel.
- Notice the oddness of Saul swearing to her by Yahweh.
- The Bible says she saw a spirit, lit. *elohim* ascending. This was apparently terminology used for any kind of supernatural being other than a demon.
- Where was Samuel coming from?
 - And this being was coming up from the earth. The Jewish people believed the spirits of the dead were below the earth, in *Sheol*.
 - In Sheol there was a place of torment and a place of rest, as mentioned by Jesus. (Luke 16:19-31)
 - Another compartment was for the angels who had sinned by leaving their assigned place. God now has them chained there. (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)

- David prophesied in Psalm 16 how the Messiah’s soul would not be left in Sheol.
- Because of Christ’s work, the situation of believers today is different.
- Where have we seen Samuel in a mantle before? This is a brilliant reminder of the story of the tearing away of the kingdom from Saul.

Terrifying Messenger, Terrifying Message (1 Sam. 28:15-20)

15 Now Samuel said to Saul, “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.”

16 Then Samuel said: “So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? 17 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, 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. 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.” 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.

- Samuel not only looks back, he looks forward, and he prophesies that tomorrow will bring the doom of Saul and his sons. Israel will suffer defeat.

A Last Meal, From A Witch’s Table (1 Sam. 28:21-25)

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. 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. 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 last meal comes from a witch’s table!
- Table fellowship with a witch is a sign of his being doomed to destruction.
- A biblical summary of God’s judgment on Saul: *So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.* (1 Chronicles 10:13-14)

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