

# Church of God Sunday School

## THE TRAGIC END OF SAUL AND HIS SONS

1 Samuel 28:1 — 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:1-27; 1 Chronicles 10:1-14

The great Prophet Samuel was dead. All the people of Israel mourned his death. Perhaps, no one missed and needed Samuel as much as King Saul. After Saul disobeyed God's command to kill **ALL** the Amalekites and **ALL** their animals (1 Samuel 15:3), Samuel "came no more to see Saul." Also, "Samuel mourned for Saul" (1 Samuel 15:35).

Once again the Philistines "gathered their armies together . . . to fight with Israel." Saul gathered all of Israel's soldiers, but when he saw the great number of Philistines, "he was afraid." Saul tried to talk to God, but God did not answer him.

Was Saul asking for God's help because he was sorry for all his sins (godly sorrow)? Or was he asking because he was in trouble (worldly sorrow)? Although Saul asked for God's help (1 Samuel 28:6), the Bible says he "enquired not of the LORD" (1 Chronicles 10:14). Because of the condition of Saul's heart, it was as though he had never spoken to the Lord (Psalm 66:18).

Saul asked his servants to find a woman who had "a familiar spirit." This was someone who claimed to speak with dead people in hopes of learning the future. We might call someone like this a "witch." God had commanded that such people be put to death (Exodus 22:18).

Saul's servants knew that there was such a woman at Endor (*EN-dor*), and they told the king about her. That night Saul disguised himself and went with two other men to see this woman. (Saul had to go in a disguise, for earlier he had commanded that all who had "familiar spirits, and the wizards" be put "out of the land.")

When they found the woman and asked her to bring up the spirit of someone who was dead, she was afraid that they were trying to trick her. King Saul promised that no harm would come to her for doing what he

asked. (How far Saul had fallen!) Then, Saul asked the woman to bring up the spirit of Samuel.

The woman saw something that caused her to be very afraid. She said to King Saul, "Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul." Saul told her not to be afraid, and he asked her to describe what she had seen. The woman said she saw an "old man . . . covered with a mantle [cloak]."

Saul, thinking he was talking with the Prophet Samuel, said, "God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams." Saul wanted to know what to do.



Saul did not hear comforting words that night. The spirit told Saul "to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Also, Israel would be beaten by the Philistines. Saul was terrified. God *would not* help him, Samuel *could not* help him, and the "witch" certainly *had not* helped him. What a terrible price Saul was paying for his many, many sins!

Saul and his men "rose up, and went away that night." The next day the battle began, "and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain." Three

of Saul's sons were killed, and Saul was wounded.

Saul ordered his armorbearer to kill him before the Philistines could. "But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it."

The very first king of Israel was dead by his own hand. He had begun well—humble and obedient—but he had become rebellious and stubborn. Finally, his rejection of the "word of the LORD" cost him the kingdom and eventually his life. What a sad end!

"So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of

it."

David, who had been hiding from Saul, did not know of Saul's death. An Amalekite (*uh-MAL-uh-kite*) came to the camp of David with news of the battle. When David heard that Saul and Jonathan were both dead, he asked the messenger how he knew this. The young man told David that he had found Saul, wounded and leaning on his spear. He claimed that Saul asked him to kill him and so he did! (No doubt, he believed David would reward him for killing King Saul.)

The Amalekite brought Saul's crown and arm bracelet as supposed proof. But David was not pleased. He tore his clothes (a sign of great grief), and he and his men "mourned, and wept, and fasted" until the evening.

David asked the messenger who he was. Then David said, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" Even David would not harm Saul, although he had several opportunities. David commanded that this young man be killed, because he had said, with his own mouth,

that he had killed "the LORD's anointed." (Was this young man lying? If so, the price for that one lie was his life!)

Then David wrote a mournful song about Saul and Jonathan. (Remember, Saul was his father-in-law and Jonathan was his beloved friend.)

*The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!*

*Tell it not in Gath . . . lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice . . . .*

*Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul . . . .*

*I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan . . . . How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!*

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD . . . and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit . . . ."*

*—1 Chronicles 10:13*

**A**

**"And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"**

**B**

**"And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand."**

**C**

**"And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you."**

**D**

**"And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went . . . ."**

**Write the letter of the Scripture below the picture it describes on the next page**

# Saul's Life

