

Saul visits the medium at Endor

Notes for 24 Aug

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Read: [1 Samuel 28:3-25](#)

Saul at his most desperate and insecure

At school, to get through a variety of English exams, there was inevitably a question on Shakespeare. The one play I always homed in on was 'Macbeth'. It embedded in my mind the idea of a witch, or in Macbeth's case, three witches.

I learned about the 'witch' of Endor as a youngster, but the image portrayed in 1 Samuel doesn't conform to Shakespeare's portrayal. In fact, when I examined both the King James' version and the NIV, and read the intercalated Hebrew to English version, there is no use of the term 'witch'.

A better, more appropriate, modern translation is the term 'medium'. Personally, because I was partially brought up in the Adventist tradition, I am much more wary of the concept of 'medium' than I am of 'witch'.

Our study begins with the comment that 'Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritist from the land'.

During much of my lifetime, I have heard little or nothing about mediums. Do we have to be wary of them, or is it a diversion from the thing that affects us most in Western Europe and increasingly in America, 'modern atheism'?

1 Samuel 28:4-5.

In these verses, do you think Saul's terror is simply because of the formidable military force facing him, or is there something else at play?

1 Samuel 28:6

He enquired of the Lord for guidance. However, irrespective of whatever communication avenues to the Lord he opened up, he was met by silence. Hence, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so that I may enquire of her".

- Why a woman?
- Was Saul at this time in his life beyond redemption?

He approached the medium in Endor disguised. After all, he had expelled all the mediums from Israel. Even Saul suspected that if she knew who he was, she was likely to be a tad uneasy! Perhaps his accent, even although he was likely using the local language, possibly would make her suspicious.

Interesting use of language in verse 10: '*Saul swore to her by the Lord*'.

Was this just a linguistic habit, or did he still have a connection to the Lord?

Discuss the following statements and questions:

1. 'She brought up Samuel'
2. Examining the apparition and the dialogue, which part is true and which false?
3. We are aware of the Fox Sisters and their classification as mediums in the latter part of the 19th Century. Also, there was a spike in medium activity after the first world war for obvious reasons. Am I correct in stating that this form of activity appears to have faded during the last number of decades in the west? If so, can you suggest a reason?
4. 'tomorrow you and your sons will be with me'.

1 Samuel 28: 20-25.

This act appears to demonstrate that this 'witch' was driven by compassion for Saul and his men. Discuss!