

Saul's Final Defiance 1 Samuel 28

Saul's Final Defiance Introduction

- Saul never quite seems to get it.
- He started with a couple of irregularities in the area of sacrifice and offering.
- He later chased down David, God's anointed successor to the throne, seeking to take his life.
- In the process he ordered dozens of the priests to be killed.
- Chapter 28 sees him consulting a medium, a practice strictly forbidden in the Law.
- This was even a law that Saul had explicitly enforced.
- Saul's compliance with God's will is always iffy.
- His defiance is always finding new ways to express itself.
- Let's begin reading at 28:3.

Saul's Final Defiance 28:3

- mediums and necromancers Communication with the dead and other types of occult activity were banned in Israel from the beginning.
- Saul's order was only in keeping with the law. Too bad he won't stick by it.

Saul's Final Defiance 28:5

- He was afraid Saul's motivation is fear, not of God, but of the Philistines.
- Saul is a classic example of a person who detests the consequences of his sin, but refuses to give up the sin itself.

Saul's Final Defiance 28:6

- The Lord did not answer him
- Prior to this, Saul repeatedly failed to heed God's voice.
- His motivation seems not to be obedience, but looking for a way to save his own skin.

Saul's Final Defiance 28:7

- Seek out for me ... a medium
- Saul knows this is wrong.
- He himself banned such practices, but he does it anyway.

Saul's Final Defiance 28:9

- Surely you know what Saul has done
- The woman unwittingly reminds Saul of his own orders.
- God is giving him every possible chance to repent.

Saul's Final Defiance 28:10-14

- 28:12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out
- 28:13 The king said to her, "Do not be afraid..."
- The woman seems shocked at this moment. Saul is not.
- His ease under the circumstances is alarming.

- When a person can remain calm in the midst of direct disobedience to the revealed will of God, there is a problem.
- It's worse when that person can hide their disobedience behind religious language (28:10) and outward signs of respect (28:14).

Saul's Final Defiance 28:15-19

- 28:15 Why have you disturbed me ...?
- Samuel is irritated by the whole thing.
- He thinks Saul is just getting what he deserves.
- Did Saul really think Samuel would have something to say to him when the Lord refused to talk?

- 28:19 Tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me
- This is a prophecy that Saul is about to die in battle.
- Saul wanted a word from the Lord really badly.
- This is what the prophet had to say.

Saul's Final Defiance What just happened?

- Some would argue that this could never have truly occurred.
- One reason would be an anti-supernatural bias.
- Another reason is that God would not have allowed it.

- Assuming the supernatural is real, there are good reasons to believe the story is true.
- It would not be *because* of the medium, but *in spite of* her – it would truly be a work of God.
- The medium admits that what she is doing is forbidden v.9
- The medium herself is surprised, even shocked v.12 She is more of a spectator than the one with special power.

- Samuel seems to actually return from the dead. v.14
- Samuel is not pleased and speaks a true prophecy vv.15-19
- God sometimes does strange things. Remember Balaam's donkey in Numbers 22? This is probably less weird than that.

- Finally, consider Moses and Elijah appearing on the Mt of Transfiguration and conversing with Jesus about his upcoming death.
- God allowed similar communication there.

The Dangers of the Occult

- Read Deuteronomy 18:9-14
- Christopher J. H. Wright is Director of International Ministries, Langham Partnership.
- He has extensive experience working in a variety of spiritual environments, including years in India. Here is his take on this passage.
 - *The list of practices here is comprehensive and not at all out-of-date, since all these forms of occult, magic and spiritism are still widespread today. And we must assume that, given the consistency of God, they are just as detestable to the Lord now as they were then.*
– Christopher J. H. Wright
- Chuck Smith attributed a lot of what happens surrounding these practices to demons.
 - *There is a reality to the spirit world, but you are warned by the Bible to stay away. It's possible to contact spirit entities, but it's a demon disguised as different people.*
– Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013)
- It's also possible that demonic activity happens more often among the people who are the most open to it.
- Ajith Fernando spent 35 years as the National Director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka. He continues in the role of Teaching Director there. This is his view.
 - *We have found that in the Youth for Christ work in the Sinhala language (where the youth are much less westernized), there is a much higher incidence of demonic manifestations than in the English work.*
– Ajith Fernando
- This was also our experience in Cambodia.
- The most common topic the teenage girls there wanted to talk about had to do with spirits who appeared to them and discouraged them in their faith.
- Conclusion: Occult practices are dangerous and should be intentionally avoided by Christians at all times.

Saul's Final Defiance Conclusions

- Getting back to Saul:
 - He persisted in disobedience.
 - David will do the opposite. He is quick to repent.

- Saul feared the consequences of his sin.
- David will fear the loss of his relationship with God.

- Consider also Peter who denied Christ and Judas who betrayed him.
- Peter is fully restored after going out and weeping bitterly over his sin.
- Judas killed himself.

- In 2 Corinthians 7:10, Paul describes a difference between:
 - “godly grief” and “worldly grief.” (ESV)
 - “godly sorrow” and “the sorrow of the world” (KJV, NKJV)
 - “sadness as intended by God” and “worldly sadness” (New English Translation or NET Bible)

- As we close, let's take a moment to examine our own hearts.
- There may be some sin or practice that is standing in the way of our line of communication with God. That was certainly the case with Saul.

- This is especially needed if there has been activity involving the occult.
- We can express true godly grief by repenting and bringing all of our sin to the cross.