

General Church Education



Saul and the Medium

1 Samuel 28

Lesson 19

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is Our King

For ages 10-11

Saul and the Medium

1 Samuel 28

Teacher Background

As the Philistines gathered to fight against Israel, king Achish sought David as a body-guard and asked his troops to fight for the Philistines. When Saul heard of the imminent Philistine attack he inquired of the Lord. Since Samuel had died, he consulted the Urim. But when he received no answer he decided to visit a medium. He put on a disguise and went to Endor. He asked a medium to bring up a spirit. The medium thought it was a trap, but Saul promised that she would not be punished. So she summoned Samuel. Samuel instantly recognized Saul. Samuel told Saul that the Philistines would kill him and his sons and capture his army. Greatly shaken, Saul collapsed. The woman insisted on feeding him, and after eating he left.

There are several contradictory appearances in this story. First, David appeared to desert Israel, and then the Lord did not answer Saul. David's apparent support of the Philistines saved his life. Had Achish known that David would be Israel's future king, Achish would have killed him. But Saul did not turn to the Lord for the right reasons and so could not hear the Lord speaking. His worldly concern did not recognize the Lord as the King of Heaven.

Focus Points

- When the Philistines planned to attack Israel Achish expected David to participate.
- Saul was afraid and consulted the Lord. When he got no answer he consulted a medium.
- The spirit of Samuel told Saul Israel would be defeated and Saul and his sons would die.

Readings from the Writings

“He who abides in Me and I in him, this one bears much fruit, because without Me you cannot do anything: if you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, even so shall it be done unto you.” John 15:5-7

“The terms Urim and Thummim mean lights and perfections, and that the breastplate in which they were set is called the breastplate of judgment consists in intelligence and wisdom.” *Arcana Coelestia* 3862

“Moreover, no leave is given to any spirit or even angel to instruct any person on this earth in Divine truths, but the Lord Himself teaches everyone through the Word...every person is in a society of spirits as to his affections and thoughts, in which he is as one with them, wherefore spirits speaking with a person speak from his affections and according to them...mediate revelation, which is effected through the Word, is better than immediate revelation, which takes place through spirits.” *De Verbo* 13.2

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.” (Psalm 125:1)

Projects and Activities (see back of lesson for answers)

Saul and the Medium Multiple Choice

Circle the best ending.

Predict What Will Happen when Saul Goes into Battle

When Saul spoke to Samuel he learned that he and his sons would die the following day. He learned what would happen in general, but he did not learn anything specific. Make more detailed predictions what might happen. Record your answers on a sheet. Discuss your thoughts.

Additional Project and Activity Choices

Communication with the Spiritual World in the Word

Many times in the Word the Lord sent people messages using angels. Identify seven stories in which people had contact with someone in the spiritual world. Use clues provided if you need help! Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-communication-with-spirits-and-angels-1samuel28.pdf> (Bonus question: Why was it wrong for Saul to receive a message from Samuel?)

Discussion: Contacting Spirits

In ancient times heaven was open. People received revelation from the Lord in this way. Today, the Lord speaks to us in His Word and it is dangerous to contact spirits. Read *Apocalypse Explained* 1182:4-5 and discuss the dangers contacting the spiritual world poses. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/dnc-eternal-life-5-angels-and-spirits-with-us.pdf>, p. 7.

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Vocabulary

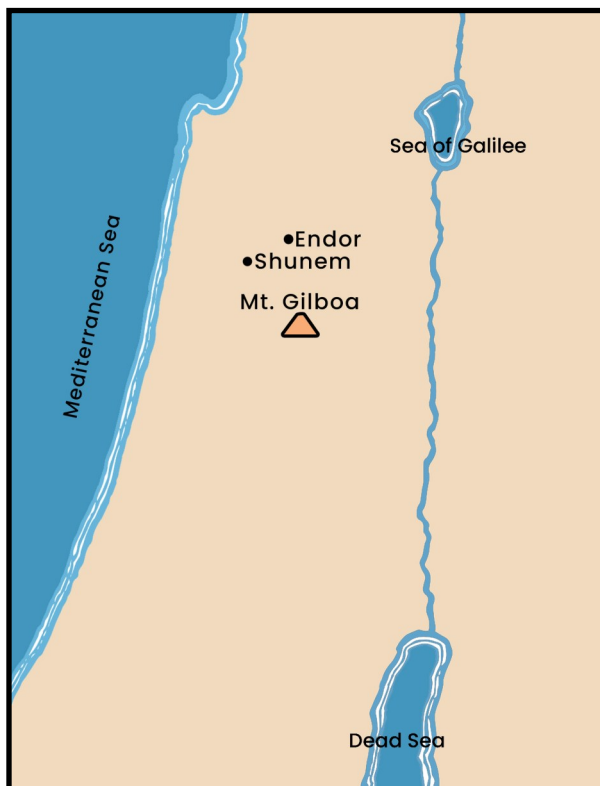
medium—someone who tries to bring messages from spirits who have died to people living on earth

séance—a meeting during which people try to contact people who have died

The Philistines Gather Their Army

The Philistines were Israel’s greatest enemy. They attacked Israel again and again. Saul was afraid of their large and powerful army. In this story the Philistines were stationed in Shunem, preparing their army to fight Israel. Achish, their king, made David one of his chief guardians.

Achish believed that David sided with the Philistines. He thought that David was willing to fight against the Israelites. Let’s find out what David will need to do to avoid attacking his own people! Saul, king of Israel, gathered his army at Gilboa. But, “When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.” (1 Samuel 28:5)



Saul Seeks Guidance

Saul needed guidance. He tried asking the Lord for help, but the Lord did not answer him. Saul must have been desperate to find out what would happen during the battle, because he did something very wrong. He said to his servant,

“Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her” (1 Samuel 28:7)

A “medium” is someone who tries to contact the spirits of people who have died and connect them to people living on earth. At this time mediums would try to contact people who had died, but the Law of Moses forbid the Israelites from having anything to do with them. Saul had also tried to make sure that people obeyed this law.

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“A man or woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death.” (Leviticus 20:27)

Saul Consults the Medium

However, Saul’s servants told him about a medium living in Endor, and Saul set off to find her. He knew that doing this was wrong, so he disguised himself and went at night. Saul had turned away from the Lord and His Word and was looking for help through a kind of magic.

When Saul found the medium, he asked her to speak with the spirit of person who had died. This is sometimes called a séance. Saul said,

“Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.” (1 Samuel 28:8)

The medium was afraid. She knew that king Saul had commanded that mediums who practiced magic would be put to death. But Saul promised she would be safe.

Saul Asks to See Samuel

Think back to the prophet Samuel who had anointed Saul king. Samuel warned Saul about disobeying the Lord. He told Saul that one day his kingdom would be taken from him. In spite of this, Saul thought Samuel could help and asked to see him!

Samuel Appears

When Samuel appeared, the medium knew her visitor was Saul! She felt frightened, but Saul

reassured her. As soon as she described who she saw, Saul bent down to the ground. He explained to Samuel’s spirit that the Lord did not answer when he called, and he needed Samuel’s help to know what he should do about the Philistines.

The spirit of Samuel gave Saul a dreadful message. The Philistines would defeat Israel in battle. Saul and his sons would die. The Lord could not help him because he had turned away from Him. He also reminded Saul that the kingdom would be taken away and given to David. Samuel’s words terrified Saul. He had not eaten



Saul Visits a Medium

all day and was so weak that he fell on the ground. The medium was worried. She encouraged him to eat some bread. But Saul refused. His servants encouraged him to eat, and he finally agreed. The woman prepared a large meal for Saul and his servants. This food gave Saul the strength to go back and prepare for the battle.

Seeking the Lord

Samuel was made very aware that he would not succeed in battle against the Philistines. Not only would he die, but his sons would die too. Even though he called to the Lord, it was as if the Lord did not hear him. Of course, the Lord did hear him, but Saul could not hear His answer because he had lost faith and disobeyed the Lord.

David fled to Gath because Saul wanted to harm him physically. Yet, where did Saul go when he was afraid? He went to a medium, which was against his own laws. Did Saul turn to the Lord when he found out he would lose his own life? What might have happened if he had decided to give up the throne to David and leave him in peace?

Sometimes the dangers we face are physical. Sometimes they are inside of us. Saul's greatest danger was his lack of faith in the Lord. It led him to seek David's death so he could keep the throne for himself.

Sometimes our thoughts and feelings can create danger in our own lives. But they cannot harm us unless we choose to put them into action or learn to love them. We may not experience physical harm, but our hearts and minds are turning away from the Lord. However, if we turn to the Lord for help, He will keep us safe from the harm bad thoughts and feelings might cause for our future life on earth and in heaven.



Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.” (Psalm 125:1)

Projects and Activities (answers are at the back of this lesson)

Choose one or two.

Saul and the Medium Multiple Choice

Circle the best ending.

Predict What Will Happen when Saul Goes into Battle

When Saul spoke to Samuel he learned that he and his sons would die the next day. While Saul learned what would happen, he did not learn how these events would unfold. Make detailed predictions about how the events will take place.

Saul and the Medium Multiple Choice

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Circle the best ending.

1. Saul was afraid because...
 - a. the Philistines were gathering their armies.
 - b. David was coming back to kill him.
 - c. he had a dream that he and his sons died.
2. Achish, a Philistine king, trusted David so he...
 - a. asked him for information about Saul's armies.
 - b. made him a chief guardian.
 - c. sent him out to spy on Israel.
3. Saul inquired of the Lord and the Lord...
 - a. sent him to a medium.
 - b. sent a message through a prophet.
 - c. did not answer him.
4. Saul went to a medium because he wished to speak to...
 - a. Joshua.
 - b. his father.
 - c. Samuel.
5. The medium didn't want to communicate with the dead because...
 - a. there was a law against it.
 - b. she was afraid that she would fail.
 - c. it was too dangerous to bring a spirit back.
6. When Saul learned that the spirit of Samuel had come, he...
 - a. started to shake and tremble.
 - b. bowed down to the ground.
 - c. ran away.
7. The first thing Samuel asked Saul was...
 - a. if he was afraid of the Philistines.
 - b. why he hadn't made David king.
 - c. why Saul had disturbed him.
8. Samuel told Saul that tomorrow...
 - a. he and his sons would die.
 - b. the Philistines would attack.
 - c. David would become king.
9. After Samuel disappeared, Saul...
 - a. made plans to go into hiding.
 - b. was dreadfully afraid.
 - c. punished the medium.
10. Before Saul left, the medium...
 - a. demanded payment.
 - b. made him rest an hour.
 - c. fed him and his servants.

Predict What Will Happen when Saul Goes into Battle

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When Saul spoke to Samuel he learned that he and his sons would die the next day. While Saul learned what would happen, he did not learn how these events would unfold. Make detailed predictions about how the events will take place.

Make three different predictions about how events will happen to Saul and his sons:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Predict how David will feel when he learns of what happens:

Jonathan is one of Saul's sons. Will he die? Explain why you think he will or will not die.

Answers

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1. a, 2. b, 3. c, 4. c, 5. a, 6. b, 7. c, 8. a, 9. b, 10. c.