

**Witches, Wizards, and Warlocks:
What Does the Bible Teach?
1 Samuel 28**

Introduction:

1. Today, it has become very popular and very accepted to explore various forms of darkness such as astrology, witchcraft, sorcery, mediums, Ouija boards, etc.
2. Just a casual glance at the video games on the market reveal that many of them involve wizards, witches, spells, violence, dark and sordid creatures, or aliens.
3. Our text this morning involves King Saul consulting a witch for help. Saul was in deep trouble (vs.4-5) and completely out of fellowship with the Lord because of his constant rebellion against God (vs. 6). Saul had ignored God's commands over and over, but now he wants God to jump when he needs help and guidance.
 - God didn't jump, because God is not our heavenly bellhop.
4. As usual, Saul took matters into his own hands, and decided to consult a woman with a "*familiar spirit*." This means she practiced witchcraft, and purported to be able to communicate with the dead. Today, witches have changed their names on their business cards, instead calling themselves channelers or mediums.
5. Witches had been outlawed in Israel because God's law for Israel called it an abomination. But, Saul managed to find one and went to see her. She said, "What dead spirit do you want me to bring up?" He said, "Samuel." vs. 7-11
6. What happens next is absolutely amazing (read vs. 12-19)! There are several key thoughts that we must understand:
 - First, this witch did not bring Samuel up from the dead. She would not have had the ability to do this. This is why she screams and is shocked when Samuel's spirit appears.
 - Second, it was God who allowed Samuel to come up from paradise and communicate with Saul. There are supernatural events that happen in the Bible once, twice, or occasionally, but they are clearly not the rule of thumb. Rather, God had an express purpose at those moments in time (parting of water, donkey talking, fiery furnace, lion's den, tax money in fish's mouth, etc.).
 - Third, God did not allow this to happen in order to commend Saul, but to issue to him a message of condemnation and judgment.
 - Fourth, by seeking out a witch, Saul put the seal of God's judgment on himself, and he died because of it. 1 Chronicles 10:13
7. What does the Bible teach about witchcraft, sorcery, and the occult? This is a great opportunity for us to understand exactly what the Bible teaches.

First, spirit beings are real.

1. The Bible teaches that there is a very active spirit world at work, right now. Angels are spirit beings that are just as real as you are. They are simply invisible to the human eye. Example: Elisha and his servant surrounded. 2 Kings 6:14-17
2. There is also a dark, evil side to this spirit world. Ephesians 6:11-12

- These are fallen angels that followed the devil in his rebellion. This is why the Bible refers to them as “devils” or “evil spirits.” Paul talked about seducing spirits and doctrines of devils (1 Timothy 4:1). They are propagating Satan's lies as we speak.
 - These evil spirits **do** have supernatural power. Example: Sorcerers in Pharaoh's court.
3. On rare occasions, God's angels manifested themselves in physical form, but this was for an express purpose. This is not typical, nor do we need angelic appearances today. We have God's Holy Spirit living inside of us, and the completed Word of God.
 4. But, there **is** a vast spirit world, and it is just as real as the world we live in.

Second, any form of witchcraft is condemned by God.

1. There are those who desire to try to tap into the power of the unseen spirit world (spirit beings, or the departed spirits of people), but this is strictly forbidden by God. Let's read Deuteronomy 18:9-14. This is as clear as the nose on your face, isn't it?
 - Under the Old Testament law of Israel, the penalty for practicing witchcraft was death. Leviticus 20:27
 - All of these things belong to Satan's policy of evil, and they are designed to lead people away from God and lead people astray. Like Saul, these things lead people away from God, not closer to God.
2. A believer has no business even dabbling in these things that God calls abominations. Paul said in Ephesians 5:11, “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*”
3. Even though Satan makes it appear innocent, protect your children and keep them away from the dark practices of Satan and the occult. Don't dabble in any form of witchcraft, sorcery, fortune telling, palm reading, tarot cards, Ouija boards, mediums, etc.
 - When you do become involved in these satanic practices you give place to the devil, which Paul said not to do. Ephesians 4:27
4. Some people claim to be able to make contact with the spirit world and spirit beings. Some people claim to hear voices and get messages from the spirit world. This is very subjective (because, usually, they are the only ones hearing it).
5. But, suppose they **were** to hear a voice! If so, we know it is not God's angels or God's voice they are hearing. God speaks today through His completed Word. Everything we need to know from God is here in God's Word. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Third, the dead cannot communicate with you or help you.

1. What about communication with departed spirits? Some claim the power to be able to do this. It is called necromancy: “Conjuration of the spirits of the dead for the purposes of magically revealing the future or influencing the course of events.” (Webster's)

2. Does the Bible support the idea that you can communicate with the dead, or that they can interact with you?
3. Absolutely not! In fact, this portion of Scripture is the only place we see this, and as we said, God allowed Samuel to address Saul in order to issue a message of judgment. This is a one-time event.
4. What **does** the Bible teach about the dead? It does not teach that they hang around here on earth and take care of unfinished business or give us guidance. Many movies have tried to sensationalize this notion, but it is completely false.
5. The Bible teaches that when people die, their spirits are immediately in heaven with Christ, or in hell awaiting their judgment day. The dead are still alive, but not here on earth. Their spirits do not have the ability to travel back and communicate with people on earth. Illustration: Rich man and Lazarus, in Luke 16:19-31.
 - The rich man desired for Lazarus to come back from the dead and warn his brothers. He said, "If a dead man returned to them, they will surely listen." Notice God's response in Luke 16:31.
6. Once a person dies, there is no unfinished business. You can't change your eternal status after you die. Any unfinished business needs to be taken care of before you die (give gospel of Christ).

In Conclusion:

1. It is interesting that 1 Samuel 28:6 says that Saul enquired of the Lord, but 1 Chronicles 10:14 says that he did not enquire of the Lord. There is no contradiction when you read both in their context.
2. Saul sought God out of desperation and wanted a quick answer. When God didn't answer, Saul should have repented of his rebellion and sin, offered the appropriate sacrifice that the law required, and enquired again of God.
3. But as 1 Chronicles points out, instead of getting his heart right and enquiring of God, he decided to forget about God and consult a witch. He knew this was of Satan and he knew that this was condemned in God's law. He made a choice of willful rebellion.
4. Saul would pay the ultimate cost. God warned him that he would die the next day and the kingdom would go to David.
5. What is the ultimate lesson we learn from this story? Satan cannot help you, so seek the living God with a humble and obedient heart. Receive and obey God's Word!