

**A LESSON ON DELVING INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD
FROM THE LIFE OF SAUL (I SAM. 28:1-19)**

If you want to measure just how far people have gotten away from God in our day just take a look at the prominence of occultic practices on every hand.

One can hardly turn on a TV set today without being bombarded with ads of the psychic network appealing to people to call a psychic to find answers and solutions for the problems they have or to find directions for which way they ought to go and what things they should avoid at certain times.

It is somewhat amusing to hear the claims of the advertisers: "We have authentic psychics which are sanctioned by the American Association of Psychics." What they are saying is "You can be sure that they are psychics of the devil."

But more than these, there are over 5,000 daily newspapers all across our land which carry a daily horoscope reading for everyone to be advised of which way to go and what to watch out for on any given day. All you have to do is just match the sign of the zodiac with the month in which you were born.

If this is not enough to convince you of just how heathen the world around us is, then consider the number of palmists and fortune-tellers all who purport to tell others what's in their future. Every little town has at least one who has her shingle out with the inscription Madam Heloise or Madam Gertrude.

In this particular study I want us to see a lesson on delving into the spirit world from the life of Saul. Some see these things which I have mentioned as a joke, but many have gotten so involved in them that they have spent a fortune trying to find a fortune and now their lives are literally controlled by the devil through these various channels.

Just what should our attitude and practice be concerning these things? Let's now take a look at what God's Word says on the subject and how Saul delved into the spirit world and got more than he bargained for.

**I. THE RESTRICTIONS WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN CONCERNING
SPIRITISM (Deut. 18:9-12)**

1. God has forbidden His people from using the practices associated with divination.

This practice was used in foretelling the future by magical means. It usually involved the intrails of animals or birds. This was the guiding force for the Roman armies when they went to battle and it was the method employed by heathen kings like Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel 21:21 says "for the King of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver."

Often an animal's liver was cut out and observed for finding directions at critical times. If it turned a certain color then it was taken to be a sign for what lay ahead.

Can you imagine how pagan and ridiculous this practice was? Yet it's no different than a person today trying to tell someone's future by the way certain cards in a deck may fall or how tea leaves may align themselves. I have known certain individuals who use these practices and believed it was the way to know what lay ahead for them.

2. God has forbidden His people from using the practices associated with an observer of times. This practice employed the stars in the various constellations which make up the so-called zodiac. Present-day observers of time are those who look to daily horoscopes which are based upon the movement of the stars in the zodiac.

3. God has forbidden His people from using the practices associated with an enchanter.

An enchanter is a person who is under demonic control and uses demonic powers to bring others under demonic control by spells and omens or curses. An enchanter co-insides with the present-day character of a witch.

It's a shame but many folks think of a witch as Elizabeth Montgomery who used her magical powers in a hilarious manner to fix everything that went awry on the TV program "Bewitched." The truth is many people are under

demonic control and they use all sorts of things to incite others to do evil.

I knew a certain man who spent years gathering materials and information on the witch covens in a particular town. It was alarming to listen to him speak of the number of people who were involved in witchcraft in the area and what all these practices involved. This man was hated by those whom he had exposed and he died an untimely death which some think was related to his enemies.

4. God has forbidden his people from using the practices associated with a witch.

A witch is a person who uses incantations to foresee the future. The word "witch" means one who knows things that are going to happen. A witch was a counterfeit prophet.

5. God has forbidden His people from using the practices associated with a charmer. A charmer was one who used magical and demonic powers to work miracles. An illustration of charmers is seen in the wisemen of Egypt who opposed Moses (Exodus 8-10).

6. God has forbidden His people from using the practices associated with a medium or consulter of familiar spirits. This practice involved communication with others from the spirit world through demons. The medium then was the supposed link between the living and the dead. But the communication involved the living with demons.

7. God has forbidden His people from using the practices associated with a wizard. A wizard is a male witch who employed magical arts and incantations to foresee future events. The Bible says "regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them." The Bible also says "and the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to play the harlot

after them, I will even set my face against that soul and will cut him off from among his people." (Lev. 19:31; 26)

8. Finally God has forbidden his people from using the practices associated with a necromancer. A necromancer is one who obtains information from the departed dead through a demon. I suppose if there is a noted example in our day it would be the movie star Shirley Mc Clane. She supposedly has been in touch with people of previous lives" who related all kinds of information to her through a mental process known as "channeling."

Some may suppose these practices have all but ceased and there is no need to beware of such practices in our day. But some of the most renowned people in this world today are involved in these practices which are all associated with demonic powers and control.

Several years ago under Ronald Reagan's administration Nancy Reagan's psychic warned her to change certain plans in scheduling for the President. This brought about a tabloid inquiry - who's running the White House, the President or his wife's psychic.

You'd be surprised if you knew just how many people look in the newspaper every day at their horoscope reading. You'd be surprised how many are involved in witchcraft. You'd be surprised if you knew how many go to palm readers and fortune-tellers or how many consult with psychics and demonic controlled people for direction for their lives.

Perhaps you have been involved in some small way in one of these practices - if so, you'd better get out before you're more deeply involved and then entrapped.

II. THE REASONS WHICH LED SAUL TO SEEK THE HELP OF A CERTAIN WITCH (I SAM. 28:3-6)

1. Saul found himself in a frightening situation with the Philistines coming against Israel (3-5).

We should note that oftentimes when people get involved in wrong things or fall under evil influences it is precipitated by some frightening circumstances they are in. Many young people who have run away from home have fallen under the evil influences of demonic controlled individuals and cults because they found themselves with no money or place to sleep. Then along came some wicked person who lured them into a life of prostitution or drugs or crime, or the devil used some cult to enslave them.

2. Saul couldn't get any answers to his prayers (6).

We should note that Saul did the right thing to do when he was in trouble—he sought the Lord in prayer, but he couldn't get any answers. Notice instead of correcting things in his life so that God would hear him and answer him he turned aside to that which God had forbidden.

As we would apply this in our own lives we need to be on praying grounds with God.

The Bible gives you and me a number of things which will hinder our prayers.

a. God won't answer our prayers if there's unconfessed sin in our lives (Psa.66:18).

"If I regard iniquity..."

b. If we've got something against a brother (Matt.5:23,24).

c. If we're asking for things which are not according to God's will (I Jn.5:14).

d. If we don't have a proper relationship with our spouse (I Pet. 3:7).

The thing to do when we call upon the Lord and get no answers is to examine ourselves and correct the problem in our lives.

III. THE REQUEST WHICH SAUL MADE TO THE WOMAN WITH A FAMILIAR SPIRIT (11)

Saul asked her to bring up Samuel. When I think of this request I am reminded of Bishop Pike some years ago who sought to communicate with his departed son through all kinds of seances. There's no telling how much money he spent trying to speak with his son and hearing the voice of some demon.

IV. THE REVELATION WHICH SHOCKED BOTH THE WOMAN AS WELL AS SAUL (12-19)

1. The woman expected the demon to appear and give her the needed information regarding Samuel but God brought Samuel back (12). Notice this woman had a familiar spirit, she was in close relation to a demon. When Samuel appeared rather than the demon it gave her a shocking revelation.

2. Saul may have expected Samuel to give him some directions that would help him but he got a shocking revelation - tomorrow he and his son would die!

As we would apply a point here, people who get away from the Lord often seek help from others to no avail.

How many times do people come to a preacher wanting him to sanction something which is wrong and they get mad at him when they ought to be getting right with God.

Warning! Consulting with those involved in spiritism could give you more than you are able to handle.

CONCLUSION

Someone will no doubt ask, "what about the Psychics who work with the police agencies to find criminals and help out in these ways? Often they are able to give clues which have led to the apprehension of certain offenders. Doesn't this prove that these people can be trusted and followed for advice? The Bible indicates that the demons who control people or

influence people do indeed know certain things but their knowledge is often distorted.

This incident in the life of Saul shows us that he was disobedient to God in seeking the help of a medium who was involved in the spirit world.

When he found himself in a situation where his prayers were not being heard and God had departed from him, he should have gotten some things corrected in his life.

Notice what Dt.18:12 says: They are an abomination unto the Lord. An abomination is something that God hates. Notice also delving into the spirit world and consulting with demons was one of the wicked things for which the Lord destroyed the Canaanites.

Perhaps you're in some situation similar to Saul- you have gotten so that your prayers are not heard and you need to correct some things.