

Did Samuel Really Appear?

The question we need to look at is, “Did Samuel really appear to Saul?” To come to a conclusion on the matter, we need to look at the Scriptures and all internal evidence. Samuel is dead, which made the Philistines the bolder and Saul the more afraid. If Samuel was alive, Saul probably thought that his presence and countenance, his good advice and good prayers would have availed him in his distress. Saul is distressed and doesn’t know what to do.

1 Sam 28:7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

God strongly condemned in scripture what Saul was going to do:

Lev 20:27 A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

Deu 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

Deu 18:11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Deu 18:12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

Deu 18:13 Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

Deu 18:14 For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

So, knowing that God condemned it, Saul still went to consult with a witch, a spirit medium and a necromancer (one who claims to consult with the dead).

1 Sam 28:8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.

1 Sam 28:9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

1 Sam 28:10 And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

1 Sam 28:11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

Now, consider an important point. Was the witch to summon the spirit of Samuel down from heaven? No. Saul knew the state of the dead, that Samuel was dead in the grave. He was actually asking the witch to call Samuel *up from the grave*, not down from heaven.

Note also that God was no longer speaking to Saul, and God's prophets were not speaking with Saul (**1 Sam 28:6**). So now, are we to believe that a witch was going to thwart the will of God by conjuring up Samuel from the grave, so that Saul could speak with a prophet of God, against the explicit will of God? No witch could do such a thing.

Remember also, the witch at Endor was known for having a familiar spirit. What is a familiar spirit anyway? It is *not* an angel of God, surely, because of God's strong condemnation against consulting with them. A familiar spirit is a demonic spirit, a fallen angel in league with Satan. This is what the woman at Endor had, communication with a demon, a demon who was quite capable of impersonating Samuel. It was NOT Samuel who appeared at her summons, it was a demon masquerading as Samuel. The first thing that the demon did was expose Saul's masquerade to the witch:

1 Sam 28:12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

Now exposed to the witch, Saul continues to consult her:

1 Sam 28:13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

1 Sam 28:14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

Note that Saul did not actually see anything himself, he had to ask the witch who is was that she saw. So based on what the witch said, Saul *presumed* it was Samuel who he was communicating with, that Samuel had been summoned from the grave to speak with him, since the witch said she could see Samuel coming up from out of the earth (not down from heaven). King Saul was putting his trust completely in a spirit medium, a witch, a necromancer, against the expressed will of God. So the following conversation was not between Saul and Samuel, but between Saul and a witch with a familiar (demonic) spirit:

1 Sam 28:15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

Again, note that Samuel is represented as *coming up* from the grave, not *down* from heaven. Saul also affirms that he knows that God refuses to communicate with him any more *by any means*, yet he expected to get guidance from a dead prophet of God via a familiar (demonic) spirit. The counsel Saul gets predicts the defeat of Israel and his imminent death, along with his sons:

1 Sam 28:16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

1 Sam 28:17 And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David:

1 Sam 28:18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

1 Sam 28:19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

1 Sam 28:20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

Conclusion

King Saul was looking for help from the witch of Endor, to contact someone in the grave, a dead Samuel, so that he could know from God how he could gain a victory over the Philistines. But God was not talking to Saul any more. By knowing what the Bible teaches about the state of the dead, *and* the circumstances regarding Saul's relationship with God at the time, we can be quite certain that it was *not* actually Samuel raised from the dead speaking to him, but a fallen angel, a demonic spirit. That Saul even attempted this séance with a spirit medium (witch) was an abomination, a further rebellion against God, and Saul paid for his rebellion with his life.

1 Chr 10:13 So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it;

1 Chr 10:14 And inquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

As the passage above clearly states, Saul communicated with a demonic spirit, *not* Samuel.