



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Samuel 28:1-25

“Saul, Samuel and the Witch of En-Dor”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning to 1 Samuel chapter 28 in our continued study of David. And this chapter does not have any really direct relationship to David so much as it does to Saul, but it's such an important chapter and so interesting for many who read it that I think it would have been disappointing if we had passed it by. So we read now the 25 verses of 1 Samuel chapter 28.

“Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, ‘You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men.’ So David said to Achish, ‘Surely you know what your servant can do.’ And Achish said to David, ‘Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever.’ Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, that I

may go to her and inquire of her.’ And his servants said to him, ‘In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor.’ [Which was not too far away.] So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, ‘Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.’ Then the woman said to him, ‘Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?’ And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, ‘As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.’ Then the woman said, ‘Whom shall I bring up for you?’ And he said, ‘Bring up Samuel for me.’ When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice.”

And in the Hebrew text, this means, it really is the same term that is used except in Greek, when our Lord was on the Cross and cried out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Literally, with a great voice, so it was something like a shriek.

“And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, ‘Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!’ And the king said to her, ‘Do not be afraid. What did you see?’ And the woman said to Saul, ‘I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth.’”

And, incidentally, this term translated “spirit” is the term that is frequently used for God in the Old Testament, as for example in Genesis chapter 1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Elohim. But the term had a broader significance than just God. It referred to human judges as those appointed by God, for example. And so, evidently, what is meant by it here is something like a celestial being. It’s translated in this case “spirit ascending out of the earth.” But we are to think of a celestial being.

“So he said to her, ‘What is his form?’ And she said, ‘An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle.’”

And again this term is a term that was associated with the prophets, meh-eel. And so from this, Saul reasons since Samuel was a prophet and really the first of the line of the prophets, that this was Samuel.

“And Saul perceived [But the Hebrew text again has ‘know’.] And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. Now Samuel said to Saul, ‘Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?’ And Saul answered, ‘I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do.’ Then Samuel said. ‘So why do you ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy? And the Lord has done for Himself [Or, perhaps, for him, that is David] as He spoke by me. For the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David because you did not obey the voice of the Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day.’”

Now, in case you haven’t been following the story along, when he mentions that Saul had not done what he should have done upon Amalek, you may turn back to chapter 15 and see that God had told Saul that in the victory over Amalek he was to destroy all of the Amalekites, and even destroy their cattle and destroy their wives and children. But Saul did not do that, did not obey him. It was very distressing to Samuel and, as a matter of fact, he saw it as an evidence of the anointment of Saul as the king was going to come to, perhaps, an evil end. And Scriptures says a very interesting thing about Samuel that he

cried all night over what had happened. That may give you some idea of how he entered into the matter.

“Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. [That is, in the life beyond the grave.] The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.’ Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night. And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled, and said to him, ‘Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have put my life in my hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me. Now, therefore, please, heed also the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way.’ [That indicates that mediums and spiritists do have a tender spirit, occasionally. [Laughter] She wanted to be sure that Saul had something to eat.] But he refused and said, ‘I will not eat.’ So his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he heeded their voice. Then he arose from the ground and sat on the bed. Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house, and she hastened to kill it. And she took flour and kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread with it. So she brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.”

May God bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this beautiful day that Thou hast given to us as the Lord's Day. We thank Thee for all that it symbolizes, all that it represents, that the saints of God gather on the Lord's Day to hear the word of God and to have Christian fellowship with one another and, above all, to exalt our triune God in Heaven, Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit. And, Lord, we give Thee thanks for the blessings of life that are ours through Christ; the forgiveness of our sins, the justification that we enjoy, the gift of righteousness as a free gift, through the Cross of Calvary, where our sins were born by the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank Thee for his resurrection and that he lives at the right hand of the throne of God to be our great High Priest and advocate and that this very moment, he lives to make intercession for us and to secure for each one of his believing children all that he has accomplished when he died on Calvary's Cross. Lord, how comforting it is to know that what he has won for us at Calvary, he lives to make ours forever.

We give Thee thanks, we worship Thee and we thank Thee that by Thy grace, Thou hast brought us from our sins into the knowledge of the Son of God.

We ask Thy blessing upon the whole Church of Jesus Christ wherever the word of God is proclaimed. May it be fruitfully proclaimed and may there be response to it. And we pray for individual churches and for Believers Chapel and its ministries and for the elders and deacons and the members and the friends and the visitors with us, we bring them all to Thee, confident Lord that Thou wilt answer our petitions.

We pray for our country. We ask Thy blessing upon our President and for others associated with him in government, nationally and in our states and cities. We pray that, by Thy grace, Thou wilt so work that we continue to have the privilege of proclaiming Christ freely.

We pray for the sick, we ask Thy blessing upon them. And for those who have requested our prayers, we pray especially for them. For some bereaving, give comfort and consolation and strength. And for others, Lord, who are suffering, O God, answer their prayers, bless them and answer the prayers of those who minister to them.

May our meeting today glorify our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and may we be responsive to thy word.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today in the continuation of our series of studies in the Life of David, is “Saul, Samuel, and the Witch of En Dor.”

Many years ago, when I first had become a Christian, someone put in my hands a book by W. T. P. Wolston. Mr. Wolston was a very interesting man, he was one of the Christian Brethren, a Scottish man, and a Bible teacher, and a Bible teacher as well as being involved in other kinds of work. But he was so gifted that he was constantly in demand and, as a matter of fact, he wrote about fifteen or more books. And one of the books that I read early in my Christian life was one that he had written. And it is called, “The Night Scenes of Scripture,” an exposition of various parts of the word of God in which things happened at night. And, of course, you can imagine and it is true that there was a chapter on the interview of the Lord Jesus with Nicodemus because that was an interview that took place by night.

It’s rather interesting to read through the Book of 1 Samuel and to discover that there are a number of night scenes in 1 Samuel. And this is one of the most striking: Israel’s first king stoops to consult a witch. What a let down from the high hopes that some had for the King of Israel. What we see in this chapter is simply put, the darkening shadows of divine retribution, and they are gathering around King Saul. Someone has written, “The ministers of vengeance are gathering like vultures to the prey, from the invisible ether, first a speck and then a vulture, til the air is dark with pinions.” Well, the air at this present time is darkening for King Saul and the vultures are flying around. And it won’t be long, in fact, just a few hours until King Saul is dead and his sons with him.

The chapter is very simple. We have the Philistine invasion and Saul’s terror over the fact. And then we have the king visiting the witch and having the most unusual experience of encountering again Samuel, the Prophet, who had died. In fact, we’ve noticed as we read through here, that that’s a statement that’s been made several times after the account of his death. “Now Samuel had died,” verse 3 says, so we are to

understand that he has died. And the experience that is described here is something that is extremely unusual and finally, at the end of the chapter, we have Saul’s miserable collapse after he receives what he should have known all along, the bad news that the kingdom had been torn from him and given, as our text says, “To your neighbor David.”

So we look at it in that way and you’ll notice it begins with the description of the fact that the Philistines have come up the coast and now have entered Israel in the north instead of from the south. And they are encamped at Shunem over against Mount Gilboa. I think that the Philistines must have been encouraged by what they had heard of the rapid decline of King Saul; depressed, his self-esteem gone, he, some of you are looking very seriously at me, you evidently weren’t here last week, but anyway, Saul’s troubles were, obviously, well known. He not only had his C.I.A. but the Philistines had theirs. And they knew that some things were happening there and now was the time to come and attack Israel.

The first verses of this first section describe the deception of King David, king-to-be David. David who, of course, is the newly anointed king, still deceiving Achish, and really living in the sin of deception. Achish said to him, as the battle draws near, “You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men.” Because he realized that this would have been a struggle for David; to fight his own people. And so, David lying again, deceiving Achish, says, “Surely you know what your servant can do.” In other words, his ambiguous reply is meant to be taken by Achish in one way, but allowing him a way out for his own deception. Embarrassed in the situation in which he finds himself, he finds recourse in sin.

You know, we always talk about providence of God. We like the providence of God. All true believers believe in the providence of God. But there is something we forget about the providence of God. It’s not always good, that is, from the human standpoint. It’s not always good. Providence has a clear tendency to allow troubles to cross the path of the wrongdoer just when, for his own purposes, it’s desirable to have his

path quite clear. In other words, when we embark upon a path of disobedience to God, we discover that providence is very vexatious. Because providence, it seems, always acts in such a way as to vex us when we are in sin. So you find Christians talking about providence of God, but they usually think of that as something that is very favorable, all of the affairs that happen, all of the things that transpire in our lives are governed by the providence of God. Yes, that's very true. But providence also operates when we are in deception and sin. And so we find that providentially, God brings things across our path that we hoped he wouldn't. So let us remember that providence can be very vexatious. And it's very vexatious for David because he is in deception and now he's faced with having to fight against his own people. At least, it appears that way. So we cannot escape the law of providential vexation when we sin or practice deceit. Remember that, too.

Now, the military confrontation is mentioned in verse 3 and verse 4, but there is a word before it that is put in for obvious reasons, the remainder of the chapter. And that is, that Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. And so now, the Philistines gather together and encamp at Shunem. And Saul gathers all Israel together and they encamp on Mount Gilboa, nearby. Especially note the dispatch of the mediums, because that will have a great deal to do with what follows. But in verses 5 and 6, we read, “When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.” His rebellious spirit, his guilty conscience, and the Philistine army over against him, bring on the desperation of despair and Saul trembles before the circumstances like a leaf in a wind.

A man we learn may seek God and not find him. That is, if he seeks him untruly. And that's what Samuel was doing, he was seeking God but not seeking him truly. And he doesn't find him. Because, after all, just think for a moment. Could the individual who hated and persecuted Samuel and David, who were both prophets, expect to be

answered by the prophets. You cannot appeal to the prophets when you are in the process of trying to murder the Prophet David, and he's a prophet. The New Testament mentions specifically that David was a prophet and responsible for great sections of the word of God. Could the individual who had slain the High Priest as he had done, in our previous studies we noted that, could you expect him to be answered by the Urim, related to the breast plate of the High Priest.

And then, of course, could the individual who has sinned away the spirit of grace in his own life, expect to be answered by dreams? No, my Christian friend, be not deceived. God is not mocked. And this individual, who says he has sought the Lord and he's not been answered, is now answered by the silence of God. “The Lord answered him not.” I'm so distressed, he said. The Philistines make war against me. God has departed from me and doesn't answer me any more. He tells the witch of En Dor. But the answer that God had given to him still held. And the answer was that judgment is coming.

What dreadful silence and loneliness Saul experienced here. We read about the silence of the desert, the silence of midnight, the silence of the churchyard and the grave, but in this there is something more profound and appalling, the silence of God when appealed to by the sinner in his extremity. It's not the silence of indifference on the part of God. It's not the silence of inability to hear. God's able to hear. Nor of weakness, nor of perplexity. It's not that God is turning to the angels and saying, “What shall we do with Saul? I'm not really sure what we shall do. He says he's seeking me, but I don't know. I'm disturbed by this. Can you help me?” No, no. That's not that. It's not the silence of God's perplexity. As a matter of fact, it's the silence of refusal. It's the silence of rejection. It's the silence of displeasure. It's the silence of the abandonment of Saul to his own sins. And what utter helplessness it brings when an individual constantly rejects the claims of God, what intolerable darkness and distress the silence of God.

Do not think for one moment that this is simply Old Testament truth and not New Testament truth. This is biblical truth. And we find it in the New Testament with reference to the Nation Israel. Our Lord speaks some of the strongest words in all of Scripture about the disobedience of the nation and about the necessity, in light of the disobedience, for them to enter into the long and painful discipline set forth in the great sections of the Old Testament, like Leviticus chapter 26. So Saul, the rebellious Saul, is an individual in the desperation of despair.

Well now, in verse 7 through verse 19, we have the story of King Saul, the witch, and the prophet Samuel. Obstinate Saul, so stubborn it seems, driven by unbelief, with three courses of action open to him, he seeks a witch, not the genuine wizard but a human wizard. I presume you know that term wizard is derived from the German term wissen, which means to know. So the wizard is a person who knows something that knows things better than others. Like Joe Montana is a wizard with a football. And, especially, if you have Jerry Rice out there to catch it. In fact, that may be the real wizardry of Joe Montana, Jerry Rice and John Taylor. But, at any rate, wizardry with a football because they know things and can do things that others can not.

Now, Saul seeks the witch, the human wizard, but not the divine wizard, the one who really knows everything, the Father in Heaven. Longing, it would seem, to know the future, not for repentance, but simply to know the future. I'm sure you know that necromancy is the polar opposite of prophecy. If a prophet is one who looks into the future and can tell us by divine inspiration what is coming to pass, the wizard, the medium who practices necromancy, that is dealing with the dead, is one who doesn't know but who puts on a good show of knowing.

I said there were three courses open to Saul. He could sit down in quiet hopelessness and let the evil come. Or he might, in faith and repentance, submit to the word of God, committing the matter to him, even amid the awful silence, and receive God's forgiveness, if it were done in truth. Or, he could take himself to Hell for counsel,

since Heaven was deaf. And he chooses the last. Someone has said, “He said, ‘God has cast me off. I will betake myself to Satan. Heaven’s door is shut. I will see if Hell’s be open.’” And for Saul, that of course, is revelatory of the spirit that was within him. So he asks for a witch. And it so happens, he’s told, well, there’s a power witch nearby. There’s one over at En Dor, a female power witch. Isn’t it interesting? There are men who are magicians. And there are men who seek to foretell the future. But when it comes to the witches, it seems that most clairvoyants are female. Most clairvoyants are female in those day and most clairvoyants are females today.

Go over by Love Field and you’ll see the signs in the yards and it’s Madam... I’ve started to say Blavatsky, but she was one who really lived. But there’s Madam Irene or Madam Joann or Madam Rebecca. And they’ll glad to give you a reading so you can find out about the future and see how you’re going to pay your bills when they come due or whatever it is you may be interested in.

At any rate, the witch at En Dor is known and what we have is the pathetic picture of a king in disguise, creeping through the night. I couldn’t help but think of Robert McFarland. Robert McFarland, our security head in Reagan’s kingdom, Reagan’s presidency. Robert McFarland with a few of his helpers decided in the midst of the administration of Mr. Reagan, whom I liked very much and still do, but, nevertheless, he decided that some special things might be obtained if a visit to Iran was made and so they did it in disguise. And so, Robert McFarland now, mind you, the minister of security to the President, puts on disguise and flies to Iran. And, of course, he’s found out. And it’s a big joke. Imagine? Imagine an individual that high in the government doing something like that? And that was just one of the steps along the way to the Iran Contra affair.

Well, as I look here and see Saul, disguising himself and creeping through the night to the witch of En Dor, you know that that’s a situation in which nothing good is going to come. At any rate, he does come. And as he is brought into the presence of the witch and he asks her to bring up someone that he will name to her, she immediately

objects and says, “Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cast off the spiritists and the mediums from the land. Why are you laying a snare for me, because if it’s found out, I’ll lose my life?” Evidently, at this point, she may not have known that it was Saul. But we remember that Saul is an individual who stood head and shoulders above the people in Israel. She may have had some suspicions. But, at any rate, she said that. And so, and notice now what Saul says. “And Saul swore to her by the Lord.” He swore to her by the Lord and he said, “As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon your for this thing.”

What was Saul’s duty as the king? Well, his duty as the king was to punish the mediums and the wizards, to get them out of the land. Yet, he swears not to do it, as if he could by his own oath, bind himself from doing that which by the divine command, the word of God, he was bound to do. Now, you can see the depths to which King Saul has gone. He was supposed to get rid of the mediums and the wizards, so in seeking to have them minister to him, he says, “As the Lord lives.” He swears by the Lord, who has departed from him, incidentally. Oh, the hypocrisy, oh, the rebellious hypocrisy of King Saul. “There shall no punishment happen to thee,” he says. “I’m the king.” Well, at least he was saying that. Well, the truth is, my Christian friend, Saul couldn’t do what he swore that he would do. And even if he could keep the witch of En Dor from physical punishment, he couldn’t keep her from eternal punishment. And so when he swears by “As the Lord lives,” surely you can see the contradiction of King Saul swearing by the Lord, who has commanded him to get rid of the wizards and witches, that he will not bring judgment upon her. The irony of it is overwhelming. But such is the progress of sin in the lives of individuals.

So she asks, who do you want me to bring up? It’s almost as if Saul is crying out from within, “Oh, that I just had Samuel with me now,” because Samuel had meant so much to him, although he had rejected him. And now, we read the woman, after she had said, had been told “Bring up Samuel for me.” We read, in the 12th verse, “When the

woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice.” It’s amazing. And she said, “Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!” When Samuel appears, in whatever form he appears, he appears so that she recognized the mantle. In whatever form he appeared, it was so astonishing to her that she shrieked. And then, realizing that, evidently, the person with her must have been a great person, because she couldn’t do that on her own, she turns and the revelation dawns upon her that it’s Saul who really is speaking.

Someone has likened this to the scene in Hamlet, in the first act, in the first scene, when referring to a spirit like this, someone says, “This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.” It’s almost as if, in this case, that’s true. The spirit that will not speak to the witch now, there is a response, knowing that she couldn’t do this, it must be someone more important here. And the revelation dawns, it’s Saul with whom she’s speaking.

Now, that raises of course the question, what really is this that has happened? I’d like to tell you, I don’t know. Right at the beginning I want to tell you, I don’t know. In fact, I don’t know anyone who knows. There may be someone who knows. Perhaps you have a friend who knows what happened. Please, let me know. But, I’m going to take the text just as it appears before us. But let me say just a few words about what has been said about it. Some have said, this is a conscious deception by the witch, a well played piece of jugglery, it has been called. Saul’s superstitious and on his superstitious mind she plays her arts. And Samuel didn’t appear. But, nevertheless, she was able to put it over as if he had. Perhaps, she recognized Saul and out of revenge deceived him because Saul had put all of the witches out of the land and had put them to death. And so, here’s an opportunity to pay King Saul back for what he’s done. That doesn’t impress me.

Others have said it’s an illusory appearance by demonic arts. That is, the medium had powers of that were characteristic of mediums by their profession, at least. And so this is an illusory appearance as a medium of divine revelation, an apparition appears or at least a claim of an apparition, and that is explanatory of what has happened. This was

the view of Luther. It was the view of Calvin. It was the view of Augustine. And, in Believers Chapel, we don't often go against Luther, Calvin and Augustine. But, occasionally, we do, just to remind them that they are human. And, in this case, I'm going to simply pay attention to the text. The text doesn't say anything about this being an apparition. It doesn't say anything about this being a ghost. It doesn't say anything about an illusory appearance. It simply says that Samuel was there.

You'll notice, verse 11, “Bring up Samuel for me.” And, when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice. This is something she knew she had not done. She couldn't do this. This is not arts that she knew about. She wouldn't have shrieked at what she saw. She realized she had been practicing all of these illusory arts and now, here's the real things, here's a real wizard who has acted. But throughout the account, you will notice that that is what it says. Saul knew, verse 14. The Hebrew verb, *yada*. Saul knew that it was Samuel. Verse 15, “Samuel said to Saul.” Verse 16, “Then Samuel said.” And verse 20, “Immediately, Saul fell full length on the ground and was dreadfully afraid, because of the words of Samuel.” There's no indication in the context that this was anything other than Samuel in a form, at least to be recognized with a mantle, but beyond that, I'm sorry, I cannot go. So I say to you that this was a real apparition, evoked by the divine will and power.

Now, it's not something, of course, that I have invented. Others have believed this too, Josephus, the Talmud, Hengstenberg, Kyle, and others, have affirmed the same thing. If we take the text from what it is as the text, that's what it says. And so we'll leave it at that.

Samuel came. It was not by divine permission. It was not by anything other than the special command of God. It surely was not at the command of the witch. And it's not at the command of the witch by God's permission. All that is stated is that Samuel came and a witch cannot do that, a medium cannot do that, only God can do that. So this is the special command of God.

Now, what follows is the word of God that has been given all along. So we go on to read in the conversation these words. Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” I think it would be disturbing for anyone to be brought up from the life beyond the grave, in which that life is a life of pleasure and happiness. Why have you disturbed me? And Saul answered, “I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams.” He doesn’t say by priests because, after all, he’s the one that slew the High Priest, so he seems to want to avoid that. “Therefore I have called you that you may reveal to me what I should do.”

Isn’t that interesting? We won’t go directly to the Lord God, who has spoken. But we’ll go to a witch. And we’ll go to the witch with the idea that we can put over to people that we are really interested in knowing what God is going to do. So Saul’s distress is the distress of disobedience. It’s not that he has a poor self-esteem. It’s simply he’s disobedient. And because he’s disobedient, that’s what happens when individuals are disobedient to the word of God. He’s already been given his answer, over and over. He wants to know his fate, but he wants to know it without repentance. If only the dead Samuel would favor the one God has frowned upon. Can you image that? God has spoken and said, the kingdom has been torn from you, Saul. You’ve lost your kingdom. So Saul will say, I think that I would like to talk to Samuel in order that he may do me some favor, delivering me from the judgment of God, when God has already spoken that this is what’s going to happen. Amazing, amazing, truly amazing.

Well, the final verses of the chapter deal with Saul’s miserable collapse. He learns that good counsel comes from the true wizard, the Lord God in Heaven, and from his institutions, the institutions of the prophets by which God ministered to men in Old Testament times. So partly from bodily exhaustion and partly from mental distress, he acts as if the Philistine archers have already hit him, falls upon the ground, and discovers there is no light at the gates of Hell. Never any light there.

If any of you would like to go over to Madam Gloria and have a reading, it won't help. As a matter of fact, it might be very, very harmful for you to do it. I hope, as evidently is true, you'll take the viewpoint that most people do, that it really won't help. Because have you ever noticed this about clairvoyance? Have you ever noticed what part of town they live in? Have you ever noticed their houses? They usually need some work done around them. They're usually having financial difficulties. And why anyone would go to have their medium give them a reading, or why they'll get the Ouija board and push it back and forth. I did that one time, a long time ago, before I was a Christian. Why individuals will do that, I don't know. But, at any rate, that's often happened. And it happened to King Saul.

The last part of the chapter is most interesting because of the witch's importunate solicitude. She wants to help Saul in a physical way, which is the only way she can help him, and she works hard at it, like importunate prayer. She keeps at it. He refuses. No, she keeps at it. And, in one sense that is illustrative of some interesting things, she has sympathy with the fallen greatness of King Saul. And it illustrates for us the fact that there isn't a sphere in which individuals, clearly contrary to the word of God may, nevertheless, exhibit humanness and humanness in its highest form of kindness to an individual who has come to disaster. And, occasionally, you'll see that in individuals who do not know the Lord at all, but there is within human nature, fundamentally, as God created, something good until the fall corrupted things. And occasionally it appears. So in the case of the woman, she ministers to the fallen king and seeks to help him. Beautiful in her conduct, although, remembering that she is a witch, the old cunning, the moral insensibility, the cynicism seemed to be set aside and the human feeling of her soul appears in a desire to help King Saul. As I say, suggestive to us, as someone has put it, of the germ of true humanity that underlies the accretions of a guilty life and the power that may be exercised over even the worst, if we only know the art of touching the hidden spring. But since the fall, all of human nature is touched by sin. Never forget that.

On the other hand, look at Samuel. Nothing is said about his sympathy to Saul. It's tender. He speaks the truth to him. But Samuel is coming from the invisible sphere, and he knows all the reasons why righteousness and justice is the thing that is right. And so he gives his word to Saul and he gives it without any sense of going out in only human kind of sympathy. Sympathy with the righteous judgments of God does not extinguish pity for those who fall under them. But in the case of Samuel, it's really important to note that in the unseen world, men know what is righteous and what is not. And they follow that which is righteous and do not follow that which is not. You see, some of the evidence of the sympathy in this life, our Lord, the perfect man, weeps over the lost city, when proclaiming with full acquiescence it's righteous doom.

Now, just a moment or two. What this story illustrates, of course, is the inevitable issue of unbelief. And, furthermore, throughout all eternity, the sin that brings us into Hell will continue, characteristic of human sin is that one sin leads to another, throughout eternity. And that is why we read in the Bible about eternal punishment. It never stops because sin never stops. If God cannot be found, men seek out a substitute. And Saul's substitute does not help man.

Oh, the pathetic tragedy of unrealized promise. This is the story of a man who began with such a glorious beginning, a magnificent beginning and now has stooped to this. His life, it's almost as if it's run headlong to ruin, now for years.

Men may be left to themselves by God, the story tells us. Underlined by the fact that Judas also faced that kind of end. “The Son of Man goes as it is written concerning him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed,” the Lord Jesus said.

Divine mercy is free. But it's righteous in its flow. The notion that God must help everyone in trouble is not scientific and is wrong. Because there are individuals who do not seek the will of God and therefore, when they seek out of disobedience and clinging to their sin, God just as in the case of Saul, is silent. It's too late. Too late often individuals appeal to the Lord God. In the case of Saul, it was too late. He had, it

seemed, clearly by his actions, brought on the judgment of divine retribution. And that is ultimately what comes to him. Those who have the opportunity, hearing the gospel message, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” as the jailer did, and do not respond and persist down through the years in not responding, the time may come when, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, may be written over their lives.

You know, there’s one last thing I’d like to say and it’s something, I confess, I really focused attention on this week for the first time. In the parables that Our Lord tells and in the words that are written concerning eternal judgment, have you ever noticed this that there is a dumb, I mean an asset in which no one speaks out in opposition, there is a dumb asset in our Lord’s parables and in the things of the New Testament, a dumb asset to the truth of divine judgment. In other words, we do not have our Lord telling the parable, for example, of the nobleman who went into the far country and coming back, and then casting individuals into hell, we do not have people saying, “Oh, but that’s not fair. That’s unjust.” It’s almost as if there comes upon the minds of individuals who have not responded to the word of God, the sense, it’s just. It’s right. And even when our Lord tells the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Rich Man does not say it is unjust that I am here. It’s unrighteous that I’m here. It’s not fair. It’s not fair! But rather, sin Lazarus, let him touch my tongue, and send the messenger to my brethren in order that they might not have to come here and experience this torment.

Oh, my friend, eternal judgment is real and true. And we cannot hope to escape it and if it should fall the lot of anyone in this auditorium to ultimately come to it, when the time comes and you have fallen into it, you will say, “It’s just. It’s righteous.” May God in his marvelous grace so touch your heart that you respond to the message that was given to the jailer. It’s very simple. What shall I do that I might be saved? Believe. Nothing added to it. Simply, believe. Not believe in surrender. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved. May God in his grace touch your heart to realize what you really are, apart from the mercy and grace of God, a sinner. And may you flee to Christ and

receive the salvation freely offered by virtue of the merits of the atoning work on Calvary's Cross, which may be yours, if you believe.

Let's stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful indeed to Thee for the passages from the word of God that cause us to think again about eternal things. It is so important, we know, Lord, that we pay attention and we know from our own natures that it is so easy to turn aside and think of something else. Lord, deliver us from any kind of refusal to turn to Thee in repentance and faith. If there should be some who have not believed at this very moment, O God, give them the faith that leads to eternal life.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.