

# Making Promises

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## Part 6: The Kingdom

### Review

- The Ziphites, who seemed to have an uncontrollable hatred of David, notified Saul that his enemy was among them, at Hakilah. Saul abandoned his previous peace treaty with David and went there after him.
- While Saul slept in the camp, David and his nephew Abishai crept up to the campsite in the night and stole Saul's spear and water canteen. Once David made Saul aware of what happened, Saul again pledged to leave David alone.
- It was obvious to David that it was only a matter of time before Saul caught up with him, so he sought asylum with Achish, lord of Gath. David requested that he be transferred to one of the outlying towns, so Achish gave him Ziklag instead of living in Gath.

### David

- Exercising some diplomatic skill, David would take the spoils of his raids and tell Achish they came from **Judah**, although they came from **Judah's enemies (1 Sam. 27:10)**. David's masquerade soon came to haunt him, however, when he found himself caught on the wrong side of the decisive battle in the long wars between **Israel** and the **Philistines**.
  - ▶ The Philistines had gathered at **Aphek** to deal the fatal blow to Israel, and Achish naturally had insisted that his vassal join him and the other lords in the battle (**1 Sam. 28:1-2**).
  - ▶ Achish had become such a believer in David that he insisted on David and his men fighting with **Gath's troops** in the united Philistine offensive against Israel. Continuing to misjudge David, Achish announces his desire to make him a bodyguard, which is literally a **watcher for my head**.
  - ▶ David who had once cut off the head of another **Philistine from Gath** and whom the Philistine generals fear will reconcile himself to Saul (**1 Sam. 29:4**). Achish, however, fails to see that David and his men constitute a dangerous **fifth column** inside Philistine territory.

### Saul & The Witch

- Israel had gathered at **Gilboa**, a mountain seven or eight miles south of **Shunem**. Following the death of Samuel, Saul was terrified by the prospect of the Philistine army on its way for battle, and though he sought council from the

Lord, he never received a response. He sought an answer through **witchcraft** instead (**1 Sam. 28:3-7**).

- ▶ Though **necromancy** and associated arts have been banned by Saul, Saul's men seemed to know precisely where a witch may be found. With Saul disguised in non-royal attire the company pays a visit to **Endor** by night.
- ▶ Although she is suspicious that she might be caught in a sting operation, Saul swears on **the Lord's life** that, although **Yahweh** has forbidden the practice, she won't be punished. At Saul's request, the witch conjures up **Samuel** from the dead (**1 Sam. 28:8-14**).
- ▶ Patiently Samuel explained once more that Saul by his disobedience had forfeited his **right to rule** and that David would take his place. Furthermore, Samuel said, Saul and his sons would **die** the very next day as Israel fell in disastrous defeat to the Philistines (**1 Sam. 28:15-19**).
- **Necromancy** and **witchcraft** was expressly forbidden in Israelite culture, but it seems that it was, at least by some, a sought after practice (**Deut. 18:9-22; Isa. 8:19-20**).
  - ▶ The story carries the stamp of **realism** because of the central and sobering prophetic message of Samuel. We must remember that Scripture describes such practices not as **futile** but as **pagan**. Yahweh forbids Israel to use these means not because they do not work but because they are **wicked**.
  - ▶ It has to be concluded then that **God commanded** Samuel to appear, even using the witch as a medium in this unusual circumstance, to give Saul a **final revelation** of his and his nation's destiny.

## David

- The **Philistine commanders** thought that in the heat of battle David would reassess his position and rejoin his former lord, Saul. Reluctantly Achish had to tell David of their decision against his participation. David returned to Ziklag (**1 Sam. 29:1-11**).
- The author of this text has rearranged the chronology of the story. In (**1 Sam. 28:4**) the Philistines and Saul are located at **Shunem** and **Gilboa** respectively, and the story takes place the night before the decisive battle. However, in (**1 Sam. 29:1**) the Philistines (including Achish and David and men) were assembling their combined forces at Aphek in the Plain of Sharon.
  - ▶ Although both David and Saul are in terrible predicaments, the Lord has cut off all **communication** with Saul and will soon **kill him**, and yet he will work out David's situation all by **the same enemy**.

## Part 6: The Kingdom

<p><b>1 Sam. 27:10</b></p>	<p>When Achish asked, "Where have you made a raid today?" David would say, "Against the Negeb of Judah," or, "Against the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites," or, "Against the Negeb of the Kenites."</p>
<p><b>1 Sam. 28:1-2</b></p>	<p>1 In those days the Philistines gathered their forces for war, to fight against Israel. And Achish said to David, "Understand that you and your men are to go out with me in the army." 2 David said to Achish, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do." And Achish said to David, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."</p>
<p><b>1 Sam. 29:4</b></p>	<p>But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him. And the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Send the man back, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him. He shall not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here?"</p>
<p><b>1 Sam. 28:3-7</b></p>	<p>3 Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the necromancers out of the land. 4 The Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem. And Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. 7 Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at En-dor."</p>
<p><b>1 Sam. 28:8-14</b></p>	<p>8 So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you." 9 The woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the necromancers from the land. Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death?" 10 But Saul swore to her by the Lord, "As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." 11 Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" He said, "Bring up Samuel for me." 12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul." 13 The king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth." 14 He said to her, "What is his appearance?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.</p>
<p><b>1 Sam. 28:15-19</b></p>	<p>15 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do." 16 And Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy? 17 The Lord has done to you as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day. 19 Moreover, the Lord will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. The Lord will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines."</p>
<p><b>Deut. 18:9-22</b></p>	<p>9 "When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer 11 or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, 12 for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord. And because of these abominations the Lord your God is driving them out before you. 13 You shall be blameless before the Lord your God, 14 for these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do this. 15 "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— 16 just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' 17 And the Lord said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. 20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.' 21 And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?'— 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.</p>

<p><b>Is. 8:19–20</b></p>	<p>19 And when they say to you, “Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,” should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.</p>
<p><b>1 Sam. 29:1–11</b></p>	<p>1 Now the Philistines had gathered all their forces at Aphek. And the Israelites were encamped by the spring that is in Jezreel. 2 As the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing on in the rear with Achish, 3 the commanders of the Philistines said, “What are these Hebrews doing here?” And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, “Is this not David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years, and since he deserted to me I have found no fault in him to this day.” 4 But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him. And the commanders of the Philistines said to him, “Send the man back, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him. He shall not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here? 5 Is not this David, of whom they sing to one another in dances, ‘Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands?’” 6 Then Achish called David and said to him, “As the Lord lives, you have been honest, and to me it seems right that you should march out and in with me in the campaign. For I have found nothing wrong in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, the lords do not approve of you. 7 So go back now; and go peaceably, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines.” 8 And David said to Achish, “But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?” 9 And Achish answered David and said, “I know that you are as blameless in my sight as an angel of God. Nevertheless, the commanders of the Philistines have said, ‘He shall not go up with us to the battle.’ 10 Now then rise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who came with you, and start early in the morning, and depart as soon as you have light.” 11 So David set out with his men early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. But the Philistines went up to Jezreel.</p>
<p><b>1 Sam. 28:4</b></p>	<p>The Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem. And Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa.</p>
<p><b>1 Sam. 29:1</b></p>	<p>Now the Philistines had gathered all their forces at Aphek. And the Israelites were encamped by the spring that is in Jezreel.</p>