

## 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 28

Verses 1 - 2

**Now it came about in those days that the Philistines gathered their armed camps for war, to fight against Israel. And Achish said to David, “Know for certain that you will go out with me in the camp, you and your men.”<sup>2</sup> David said to Achish, “Very well, you will learn what your servant can do.” So Achish said to David, “*Then* I will assuredly make you my bodyguard for life!”**

**Now it came about in those days that the Philistines gathered their armed camps for war, to fight against Israel.**

See 1 Samuel 14:52

**<sup>52</sup> Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any warrior or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff.**

**And Achish said to David, “Know for certain that you will go out with me in the camp, you and your men.”<sup>2</sup> David said to Achish, “Very well, you will learn what your servant can do.” So Achish said to David, “*Then* I will assuredly make you my bodyguard for life!”**

David's deception had finally caught up with him and now he had no choice but to go to war against Israel or be found out to be a traitor. Also, if Achish made him his body guard David would be tethered to the king and unable to continue his campaign of raiding various towns in Philistia.

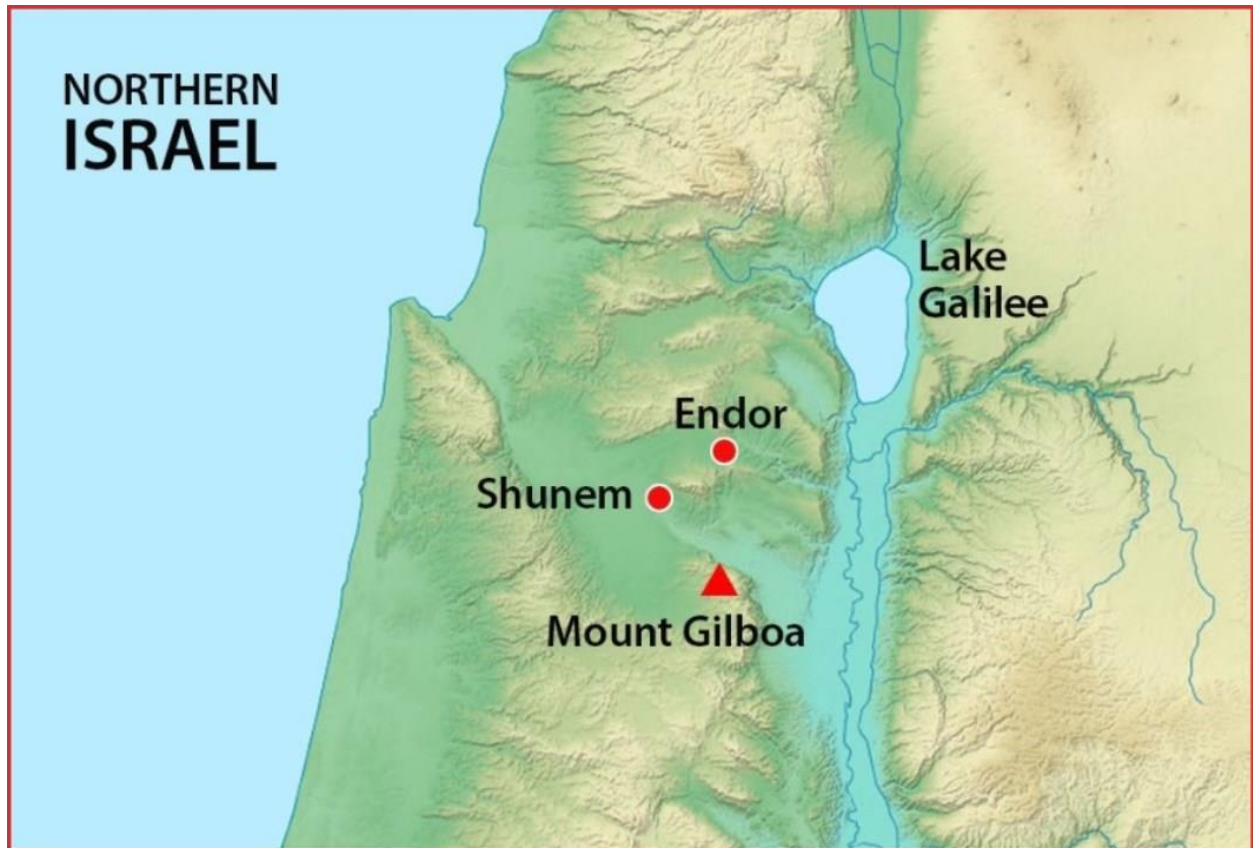
Verses 3 - 4

**<sup>3</sup> Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had removed the mediums and spiritists from the land.<sup>4</sup> So the Philistines assembled and came and camped in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they camped in Gilboa.**

We don't know for sure why Saul put the mediums and wizards out of the land but he may have done it as a memorial to Samuel after his death.

The Philistines encamped at Shunem and Israel at Gilboa.

See map 2805



Verses 5 - 7

**<sup>5</sup> When Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. <sup>6</sup> So Saul inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him, either in dreams, or by the Urim, or by the prophets. <sup>7</sup> Then Saul said to his servants, “Find for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her.” And his servants said to him, “Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at En-dor.”**

**<sup>5</sup> When Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly.**

As can be seen from the map above Israel was camped in a mountainous or hilly area and the Philistines were camped in the plain. We are not told if the Philistines had chariots of iron but this could have been one of the factors that caused Saul to tremble.

**<sup>6</sup> So Saul inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him, either in dreams, or by the Urim, or by the prophets.**

This verse seems pretty straight forward but there is a difficult issue to talk about here.

See 1 Chronicles 10:13.

**<sup>13</sup> So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he committed against the Lord, because of the word of the Lord which he did not keep; and also because he asked *counsel* of a medium, making inquiry of her, <sup>14</sup> and did not inquire of the Lord.**

It seems that Saul did inquire of the Lord so why does the writer of 1 Chronicles say that he did not inquire of the Lord?

Some commentators have suggested that maybe the writer of 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles viewed Saul's action of reaching out to a medium as a nullification of the inquiry that he had made to the Lord? While this is a possibility it is far from being definitive.

There is no doubt that Saul had a reputation for being impatient and not following the Word of the Lord but that does not nullify the fact that he did attempt to seek the Lord's will.

**<sup>7</sup> Then Saul said to his servants, "Find for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at En-dor."**

Despite his own edict Saul requested that his servants find a medium.

The location of En-dor was just north of their current location.

See map 2805 above

Verses 8 - 14

**<sup>8</sup> Then Saul disguised himself by putting on different clothes, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night; and he said, "Consult the spirit for me, please, and bring up for me *the one* whom I shall name for you."**

**<sup>9</sup> But the woman said to him, "Behold, you know what Saul has done, that he has eliminated the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why are you then setting a trap for my life, to bring about my death?" <sup>10</sup> So Saul swore an oath to her by the Lord, saying, "As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this**

thing.” <sup>11</sup> Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” And he said, “Bring up Samuel for me.” <sup>12</sup> When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, “Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!” <sup>13</sup> But the king said to her, “Do not be afraid; but what do you see?” And the woman said to Saul, “I see a divine being coming up from the earth.” <sup>14</sup> He said to her, “How does he appear?” And she said, “An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe.” Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.

<sup>8</sup> Then Saul disguised himself by putting on different clothes, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night;

How did she fail to recognize Saul, the tallest man in all of Israel?

It was 7 to 8 miles from Saul's camp at Gilboa to Endor (as the crow flies) but they could not take a direct route since they needed to avoid the Philistine encampment.

<sup>11</sup> Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” And he said, “Bring up Samuel for me.” <sup>12</sup> When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, “Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!”

The woman probably didn't expect an actual spirit to appear so when the Lord caused Samuel to come forward, she became frightened and cried out.

But how did she know the man making the request was Saul?

Since this appearance was real, not part of her inventive skills, she immediately concluded that God had done this and the only person God would do this for was likely the king of Israel himself.

Give her credit for being quick on her feet as most con artists have to be.

<sup>14</sup> He said to her, “How does he appear?” And she said, “An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe.” Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.

The woman had not said yet that it was Samuel, but Saul had asked for him and after hearing her description of this old man in a robe he knew it had to be Samuel.

Verses 15 - 19

**<sup>15</sup> And Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Saul replied, “I am very distressed, for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has abandoned me and no longer answers me, either through prophets or in dreams; therefore I have called you, so that you may let me know what I should do.” <sup>16</sup> Samuel said, “But why ask me, since the Lord has abandoned you and has become your enemy? <sup>17</sup> And the Lord has done just as He spoke through me; for the Lord has torn the kingdom from your hand and given it to your neighbor, to David. <sup>18</sup> Just as you did not obey the Lord and did not execute His fierce wrath on Amalek, so the Lord has done this thing to you this day. <sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the Lord will also hand Israel along with you over to the Philistines; so tomorrow you and your sons *will be* with me. Indeed, the Lord will hand the army of Israel over to the Philistines!”**

**<sup>15</sup> And Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Saul replied, “I am very distressed, for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has abandoned me and no longer answers me, either through prophets or in dreams; therefore I have called you, so that you may let me know what I should do.”**

According to Saul, God has abandoned him. Well, part of that statement is true. Yes, God has abandoned Saul but that is because Saul chose not to obey the Lord. Which came first?

**<sup>18</sup> Just as you did not obey the Lord and did not execute His fierce wrath on Amalek, so the Lord has done this thing to you this day.**

Samuel tells Saul that he has not received an answer because he had failed to obey God in the past when he was told what he should do. What good is accomplished if someone seeks God will in a matter and then ignores the message?

**<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the Lord will also hand Israel along with you over to the Philistines; so tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Indeed, the Lord will hand the army of Israel over to the Philistines!”**

Tomorrow will not take place until chapter 31, but Saul will die shortly after his two sons die in battle.

Verses 20 - 25

**<sup>20</sup> Then Saul immediately fell full length to the ground and was very afraid because of Samuel's words; there was no strength in him either, because he had eaten no food all day and all night. <sup>21</sup> The woman came to Saul and saw that he was utterly horrified, and she said to him, "Behold, your servant has obeyed you, and I have taken my life in my hand and have listened to your words which you spoke to me. <sup>22</sup> So now you too, please listen to the voice of your servant, and let me serve you a piece of bread, and eat *it*, so that you will have strength when you go on *your way*." <sup>23</sup> But he refused and said, "I will not eat." However, his servants together with the woman urged him, and he listened to them. So he got up from the ground and sat on the bed. <sup>24</sup> Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly slaughtered it; then she took flour, kneaded it and baked unleavened bread *from it*. <sup>25</sup> She then served *it* to Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they got up and left that night.**

**<sup>20</sup> Then Saul immediately fell full length to the ground and was very afraid because of Samuel's words....**

The message from Samuel overwhelmed Saul and he was weakened by his lack of sustenance over the last 24 hours.

**<sup>23</sup> But he refused and said, "I will not eat." However, his servants together with the woman urged him, and he listened to them. So he got up from the ground and sat on the bed.**

Being filled with fear and not eating is a bad combination considering the fact that Saul was facing a war against the Philistines the next day. So the woman and his servants convinced him he had to eat.

**<sup>24</sup> Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly slaughtered it; then she took flour, kneaded it and baked unleavened bread *from it*.**

The author of one commentary said having a fattened calf in the house was merely an archaic way of saying that she had such an animal readily available. However, that argument was not backed up by any scripture or historical literature.

The following is another possibility and there is some evidence to support it.

See Judges 11:30 – 35

<sup>30</sup> And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, “If You will indeed hand over to me the sons of Ammon, <sup>31</sup> then whatever comes out the doors of my house to meet me when I return safely from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.” <sup>32</sup> So Jephthah crossed over to the sons of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord handed them over to him. <sup>33</sup> He inflicted a very great defeat on them from Aroer to the entrance of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim. So the sons of Ammon were subdued before the sons of Israel.

<sup>34</sup> But Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, and behold, his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. And she was his one *and* only child; besides her he had no son or daughter. <sup>35</sup> So when he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Oh, my daughter! You have brought me disaster, and you are among those who trouble me; for I have given my word to the Lord, and I cannot take *it* back.”

Jephthah said that whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me, I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering. One has to believe that he thinking of a fattened calf or some other animal because the grief that he expressed when he saw his daughter coming out tells us he was not expecting her or any other human.

There may have been a custom of keeping a fattened calf or other animals in a separate room of the house pending the day it was to be offered as a sacrifice. That may sound very odd to people living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but maybe not for those living in the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>25</sup> **She then served *it* to Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they got up and left that night.**

Saul felt better after the meal but it had to be a long ride back to the camp as he considered the message from Samuel about him and his sons.