

## 1 Samuel 28 Chapter Introduction

**28:1;** In chapter 28 both king Saul and David face perilous times. Both are in dire circumstances because of their earlier *decisions*. Decisions that involved either their failure to *obey* God or to *trust* His word. Scripture records this episode as an important reminder for every child of God: obeying and trusting God's word is both *vital* and *precious* truth. However, *not* to do so can be a path both troubling and even calamitous.

First, Saul's woes surface in the opening sentence: "... *the Philistines gathered their forces for war ... against Israel.*" Then in the following sentence David's troubles are introduced when Achish, the king of Gath, says to David: "*You and your men are to go out with me in the army [against them]*" (vv.1,2). Only God could orchestrate such a pair of calamities. The Philistines have assembled in mass for a decisive assault against Israel: an assault that will place the Philistines in the position they sought when Goliath was their champion (17:8-10). Now who will go out and fight on behalf of the Philistines this time? Not Goliath, but David! The one God anointed as king and shepherd over Israel is now obligated to fight against them. The one who owns the sword of Goliath finds himself in a desperate situation on the side of Israel's foe. But thankfully God is still in control and working out His perfect plan!

**28:5;** Saul, out of great fear, takes another step downward. He sees and compares his forces against those assembled against him and "*his heart trembled greatly*" (v.5). When Saul sought help and direction from the LORD the heavens were brass. His unrepentant heart had turned God's ear away from him (Psalm 66:18). And even though a channel of God's mercy was still open to him (Psalm 51:17), Saul again chose a different direction: he sought for a medium to "*bring up for me*" Samuel (v.8). Under the cover of night and in disguise Saul went to a medium in En-dor to seek counsel from the dead (vv.7-8).

**28:12;** In a nearly comical scene, Samuel is brought up from "Sheol" to the utter surprise and astonishment of the medium! Who being more surprised than any, "*cried out with a loud voice*" (v.12). Such a response merely revealed the true deception of her demonic practice. For God alone is able to raise the dead. This time God intervened to bring up His prophet, who then announced the death of Saul by the Divine will.

**28:15;** Samuel's words to Saul were those of a *true* prophet. For he continued to be a faithful messenger of the LORD. Samuel placed the responsibility squarely on Saul for God turning away from him. In fact, He had become "*his enemy*" (v.16). Saul's disobedience to God had brought upon him the bitter consequences he now faces. Samuel foretells that the end of the road will come quickly for Saul: "*tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me, [and] the LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines*" (v.19).

**28:20;** After a time of needed recovery, "the condemned man ate his final meal" (MacDaonald, p.319), then Saul "*arose and went away that night*" (v.25).