



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1868 ~ Saul and the Witch of Endor.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

Last week we heard about David the Israelite defeating his father-in-law, King Saul, by approaching him while he slept and taking his spear from beside his head. This week, the story continues. But David's joy of being trustworthy was short-lived; he sank into a deep depression by believing that one day, he'd lose to Saul and be killed. David needed to call on God in prayer, thank Him for his victory over Saul and ask God where he should be taking his small community of people to hide next. It's not recorded that David did all this, but he may have decided himself that he would go to the Philistine city of Gath. In all probability, Saul wouldn't chase him any further once he was outside of Israel's borders.

By this time, David had gathered a fighting force around him, and King Achish of Gath saw an advantage in inviting David and his men to become part of his Philistine military forces. By offering David sanctuary, King Achish felt that he could obligate David to aid him in his own struggle against King Saul. But David had another plan altogether. He asked to be located in a country town where Achish couldn't keep a close eye on him.

After some further discussion, Achish let David, his men and their families live in a town called Ziklag, which was at the edge of Philistine-occupied land and close to Israelite territory. Achish believed that if David lived there, David could easily attack Israel's outposts and gradually weaken Saul's power.

However, David had no intention of attacking the Israelites; instead, he started attacking people to the south of the Philistines, who were all enemies of Israel. In this way, David benefited the Israelites and they began more and more to look upon him as Israel's defender. Meanwhile, Achish saw all the plunder David had captured and assumed it had come from overtaking Israelite towns! David clearly intended to deceive Achish by his actions. David made sure he killed all the people from the towns that he attacked so that no one was left alive to report the truth back to Achish.

Whenever Achish asked David where he'd gone raiding, David gave him the names of places controlled by the Israelites, so the king couldn't check up on David. Achish was pleased; he trusted David and thought that David must be causing the Israelites to hate him so much that he would never be able to return there. How mistaken he was! David was biding his time for the remainder of Saul's lifetime. Though Scripture doesn't condone all of David's methods, it's clear that God continued to be with him during this period.

In Old Testament times, there were set seasons when the armies from different nations would go out and battle one another. Winter time, with maybe some snow on the ground for a short while, was considered a bad time to go to war. The Philistines were preparing to do battle again with Israel and King Achish reminded David that he and his men would be expected to fight on the Philistine's side, for those who accepted sanctuary in a foreign country were obligated to fight for that country. Yet David only pretended to agree.

In Leviticus, chapters 19 and 20, the Mosaic law handed down to the Israelites stated that all mediums, witches and fortune tellers in Israel were to be put to death. Saul partly upheld this law by expelling from Israel all those who sought to make contact with the dead. Anyone who consulted them was also cut off from their people.

However, when Saul saw the growing size of the Philistine army that he would soon be fighting, he grew very afraid. He badly needed military advice. So he enquired of the Lord. Usually a king did so through Israel's high priest, but Abiathar the priest was now with David. Samuel the prophet was dead. How was Saul to make contact with the Lord?

When Saul became desperate for help, he decided to violate his own decree and consulted a medium. He visited her in disguise, taking only two others with him at the time. The woman, who was called the Witch of Endor, was afraid at first to carry out Saul's request and to bring up a spirit from the dead for him. When Saul swore in the Lord's name that she wouldn't be punished, the witch agreed and Saul asked for Samuel the prophet to be brought up.

What the medium saw may have well been a vision. We can't be sure but she was certainly given insight to know that the person asking questions of Samuel was really King Saul himself. Also in foresight, the spirit representing Samuel revealed to Saul that he and his sons would all die the following day. Despite Saul's terror of the future that overwhelmed him, he also hadn't eaten anything all day and by now, he was rather weak. So the woman prepared some food and Saul regained his strength and walked out into the night.

What can we learn from this strange episode in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel, Chapter 28? King Saul, who'd been given many battle victories by God, had over time become so lost in his path in life that he went to a satanically inspired person for advice. How could he sink so low to rely on the occult and its evil spirits? Saul put his own will ahead of God's and in doing this, he disobeyed God. Saul's greatest enemy was not the army of the Philistines, but really, himself.

It's important for us to learn that we can seek God using unscriptural means. Saul's recorded example will never justify the use of horoscopes, fortune telling, tarot cards, witchcraft or any other kind of modern-day mediums, in an attempt to gain access to immediate spiritual guidance, knowledge of the future and power. All these things are hateful to God and therefore forbidden to Christians. God Himself, through His Holy Spirit, promises to give His believers all the guidance, power and spiritual blessings that they could ever need or even imagine in this life.

What a witch sees in her crystal ball when calling up a dead person is really a demon representing that person. It's a great deception and why God teaches us in the Bible that speaking to dead relatives and departed people is strictly forbidden. God has already revealed to us in the Scriptures all the things that He wants us to know about the future. If a person was told that they'd be hurt in an accident tomorrow, fear would keep them at home and in their bed all day. God doesn't want us to be controlled by fear in such a way.

Christians need to establish a way of regularly checking on their spiritual growth. Is something or someone holding us back from being in the presence of the Lord and waiting on Him to act on our behalf? As with King Saul, David found that his own father-in-law was his most persistent opposition to God's plans for himself! There are many things that we can choose to do with our lives that will eat up a lot of spare time, but such things may not produce any increase in spiritual growth. We need to be prayerful and discerning as we seek God's will and the Holy Spirit's guiding direction. Are we spending too much time on the things of little importance?

While Saul was visiting the Witch of Endor, David and his 600 men were marching at the rear of the Philistine army. But some of the Philistine commanders didn't like this. Achish assured them that they didn't need to worry about David but the commanders weren't convinced. They heard about his fame as a warrior and they thought that when the armies of the Philistines and the Israelites started fighting, David and his men would fight for Israel. And in the end, Achish didn't want to upset his commanders, so he asked David to return back to Ziklag.

Although Achish didn't want to offend David either, David must have been secretly relieved that he no longer could be forced to fight his fellow Israelites. The Lord Himself had intervened and once again, given David a way out of his problem.

No matter what our circumstances are, we're to remain thankful and have faith in God. King Saul lost his faith in God because he didn't nourish his spiritual growth through continuing obedience. If he'd sincerely acknowledged that he had wronged God by the things that he'd done, God would have no doubt forgiven him and saved him from the Philistine attacks once again. But Saul had remained disobedient to God by consulting a witch; his obsession was to retain his kingship no matter what, and he failed to humble himself before God, the One who had chosen him to be king.

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to value the things that God values, and to live by faith in Jesus' complete forgiveness of all our sins, even when it's not easy to do so. When we read to the end of the Bible, we see that those who are faithful to God will be overcomers in the end, even if they have to forfeit their own lives here on earth first. But how can this be? The Lord Jesus came to suffer and die for the payment of every person's sins, so those who are willing to put their trust in Him and what He has done might receive forgiveness for their wrongdoing and be reconciled back to God.

After Jesus' death, his body lay in a cold dark tomb for three days before He arose, in victory over death. Before Jesus left His disciples to ascend back into heaven, He told them in Matthew, Chapter 28: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

Jesus ascended back to heaven to be enthroned and highly praised, and to sit at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Jesus is exercising God's rule over the entire world and universe. God's Word warns us that there is coming a day when the kingdom of God will rule over all kingdoms on earth. This was announced as far back as around 600 BC to the world ruler King Nebuchadnezzar at that time by the prophet Daniel.

During end times, the Bible says, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever."

Jesus is now exalted to His rightful place as Saviour-King of the whole world. He's there directing all things for His Father's glory and His people's good; and He does so by providing for their needs and protecting them from evil. Jesus is the One alone who has authority to save; no one can save themselves. Our hope of salvation extends to heaven itself when we who are living in Christ on this earth will share perfectly in the future life of God for all eternity.

While we live out our days in obedience to Christ, the Bible urges us to follow the Lord Jesus' instructions in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 5, verse 44: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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