**Speaking With the Dead, No. 1 - BD23-01**

Speaking with the dead is a very fascinating subject in our day. We have learned that demons can possess unbelievers and that they can influence Christians. They can do this through idolatry, through sex, through drugs, and through mental attitude sins. All of these are expressions of negative volition.

We looked at the demoniac of the Gerasenes as an example of demon possession. What we found there can be applied to our current situation of people who are demon-possessed and demon-influenced. We discovered in that scriptural record that a demon-possessed person has a loss of individuality. He has abnormal tastes. He goes in for nudity in public. He pursues self-mutilation. He is characterized by raging violence. He has abnormal strength. He can be indwelt by a multiplicity of demons. The demons fear to be sent to the abyss, where someday they are going to be restrained, during the millennium. The demons are subject to the commands of Jesus Christ. The demons cause abnormal animal behavior. We also found that society was helpless under demon influence. As a matter of fact, they preferred it to the presence of the Lord.

Now this morning we begin a study of the role of demons in séances, contacting the dead, and in miracle healings and in tongues. Now there is a fallacy that we need to look at this morning, to begin with, which is going to apply not only to speaking to the dead, which is our subject this morning, but also to the subject of miracle healing, and to the subject of speaking in tongues. We have established, first of all, that all supernatural phenomena are not from God. For example, the magicians of the Pharaohs in Egypt in Exodus 7:11-12, 20-22, and Exodus 8:7. All of these passages record miracles that the magicians of the Pharaohs’ court were able to produce, identical to the things Moses was doing under the power of God. Revelation 13:13-15 and Matthew 24:24 speak to us about the False Prophet who will be doing, in the end times, some very miraculous things. In fact, the miracles, the supernatural that he will perform will be of such an impressive nature that even elect people will almost be deceived into believing that it is of God.

Satan and his demons thus have the power to counterfeit the miraculous. Now you must understand that. So if you see a person healed, that doesn’t mean that God did it, though the person may have been healed. If you hear a person in gibberish, or even if you heard a person speaking in a known language of the world today which that individual himself did not know, it is not necessarily of God. If you hear someone speaking from beyond the grave, it is not of God. The demons can cause sickness, and they can heal by removing the sickness. One thing they cannot do is raise the dead. That’s one of the current things that the Jesus movement people are trying to do. They are practicing in morticians’ establishments to raise the dead.

They can cause feelings of ecstasy in individuals. Consequently, the demons can imitate tongues—gibberish, but they can even imitate known languages. They can influence believers. They can cause them to do such things, as the Jesus people who are trying to turn water into wine. Now the demons could accommodate this. Supposing it happened. Suppose that the next time this group meets and has their Lord’s Supper, and they pray for the water to be turned into wine, suppose that it does. That does not mean that God has acted. Now unless you understand this and get this clearly in your minds, you will be at a loss to interpret what is actually taking place in the experiences of people today.

So the question is not whether anybody had a certain experience or whether it took place, because it did. The question is whether the experience is from God or whether it is from Satan. Only doctrine determines which it is. Therefore, you must know doctrine. One thing that characterizes people who make this mistake of judging the Word of God by their experience, one thing that characterizes those people is that they’re ignorant of doctrine. They don’t know much about the teachings of the Word of God. This is the primary mistake of the Pentecostalists, judging doctrine by experience—their own or somebody else’s that has been reported to them. Satan counterfeits divine experiences (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

So there are certain problems when we try to judge by experience, and here’s what they are. Problem number one is misapprehension. To judge whether a true or not true by your experience, or someone else’s experience, has the problem of misapprehension of the origin of the experience. Many real experiences are psychological, or satanic in origin rather than divine. The unbeliever can be indwelt by the demon. The Christian can be influenced by them. Demons have great information about past. They have often been eyewitnesses to events of history. So they are able to imitate historical personalities. They speak languages, even in ancient languages, because they have been there. They have learned these things. They have heard them. They can influence, therefore, the mentality of a believer, as well as indwell an unbeliever.

They can manipulate the emotions so that a person feels good. Demons will give you an experience of ecstatics where the control of your directive mind is neutralized by religion or by the old sin nature or by carnality, and the emotions take over and dominate your being.

**Demons Predicting the Future**

Demons can predict the future. How can demons tell the future? Where does a fortune teller get his information that he can make such fantastic declarations? How can a Jean Dixon predict that President Kennedy, if he comes to Dallas, is going to be assassinated? Well demons are able to predict the future, for certain reasons, as they did to her. Demons are able to bring about the one thing that they predict. That’s point number one. They can bring about what they predict. They have limited areas of freedom to work on people and on events, so they can bring about what they predict is going to happen.

Secondly, demons gain information by listening to the plans of others, so they know what’s up. They were privy to the plans of Lee Harvey Oswald, to the assassination of President Kennedy. They were observing all of his moves and they put two and two together as he made the preparations, and secured the weapon, and so on. As demons surround and observe you and listen in to what you are saying, and so they have information.

Number three, the demons have great understanding of the patterns of human nature and of the logical consequences. Consequently they can predict the logical consequences of certain acts because they know where human nature is going to move. They’re able to interpret a person’s real intentions, by means of his actions. They have a vast frame of reference on which to judge. They’re able to discern the implications behind what people say, and what the outcomes are going to be of what they say.

Fourth, they learn from the general outline of biblical prophecy and the information from the angelic convocations. Remember that God calls the demons and the good angels together and they have angelic convocations such as they had over Job. And when the demons are told to report in, Satan and all the demons trudge up there and they report in to God, and they have a mass convocation, and the discussions give them further information, as they did in Job’s case.

So, demons have ways of knowing the future. Misapprehensions of the sources of your information. When you judge by experience, you are likely to misapply where the information came from.

Second is faulty deduction of the nature of the experience. An actual experience can be mislabeled or misunderstood. Doctrine is the only frame of reference to evaluate what has actually happened.

Then there is a third, and that’s variation in emotional patterns. People have variations in emotional patterns. An emotionally unstable person has difficulty in learning and accepting doctrine. Consequently, this person lacks a storage of doctrine within his being, and consequently he is an unreliable evaluator of what is taking place. He has wild swings of emotions and he substitutes his emotions for divine viewpoint. So an emotionally dominated person is psychologically unqualified to interpret experience reliably. So an argument by experience or feeling doesn’t necessarily mean a thing as to what is really the truth.

Alright, with that background, let’s look at the practice of necromancy. This word means contacting the dead. The practice of necromancy is to speak with the dead. It comes from the Greek word “necros,” which means “dead,” and from a second Greek word meaning “divination” or “bringing information.” So what it means is divination or telling the future or gaining hidden knowledge by contacting the dead.

There are certain terms that are used in the authorized version that you should be familiar with. As you read through your translation in the authorized version, the King James Bible, you will come across the term “familiar spirit.” This refers to a demon who gives information. You’ll come across the term “wizard.” This is a male medium or a fortune teller. A witch is a female medium or a female fortune teller. Then you have the expression “spirit of divination” which means a demon who possesses a medium and fakes communication as coming from the dead.

Necromancy is a demonic function. It is used to gain control of people. Let’s establish it once and for all. The dead cannot be contacted. You cannot speak to dead people. There has never in the history of the world, except on one occasion that we shall look at this morning, been a contact with someone who has died. Instead, the demons speak, as if it is the dead person speaking. They’re able to imitate his voice. They have information. They know what to say and what not to say. The vehicle for this practice is the séance where people gather around a table in a darkened room, often holding hands. They sit in a room and contact, through the medium, someone from the dead. It is really a demon they’re contacting. This is called a séance. The practice of necromancy is a sign of negative volition to doctrine. The most recent example that we have in our day, as we have indicated, is that of Bishop Pike who denied major basic doctrine and thus was encouraged by the demon’s fake communication from his son because he didn’t know how to interpret what was happening.

The Bible condemns all efforts to communicate with the dead. The religions of the world are not hindered by a belief in spiritistic activity because the religions of the world actually come from demons. They are demons in origin. Bishop Pike abandoned all biblical authority as the supreme source of spiritual truth.

In a paragraph from Dr. Unger’s book on The Hauntings of Bishop Pike, Dr. Unger says, concerning Bishop Pike, “He maintained that we are more and more open to truth, no matter what its source, and most Christians today would not assert that Buddhists, Muslims, and even animists worship a different god, but rather that they worship the ground of all being in a different way.”

Bishop Pike said the Bible is not the only source of truth, and that all the religions of the world originate on the basis of truth, and they are all worshipping the same supreme being. However, what the bishop did was that he rejected all of the scriptural prohibitions concerning mediums and contacting mediums in order to contact the dead (Leviticus 19:31, Leviticus 26, Leviticus 20:27). In these passages, God declares that He is God. He is the source of information, and therefore He is the one to be contacted.

So contact with the spirit world of demons is forbidden because it degrades a person and it leads him away from God and from the truth. Modern spiritism is all around us. But it is not in some primitive form. In our culture it is dressed up in a most refined way, but it has the same self-destructive end. Again quoting Dr. Unger in describing spiritism today, “The manners and the methods of occult forces have varied since the attacks on God’s people in Old Testament days. Purpose and power are the same. Diviners … sorcerers, charmers, mediums, wizards, and necromancers were the pagan professionals who interceded with their gods. The demon spirits who inhabited idols (1 Corinthians 10:19-20).

“Their modern counterparts, the mediums, psychics, clairvoyance, astrologers, and fortune tellers of the present day are cultured professionals who mediate the same spiritistically oriented religion. Modern spiritistic groups respect, venerate, and worship the evil spirits of antiquity, though often unwittingly. The demons thereby lose the abject subservience they desire, but they gain the mortal’s dependence and their eventual companionship in hell.”

Now Bishop Pike was totally disoriented in his mind relative to spiritual reality. Once he rejected the Word of God, he was adrift. There was nothing to feed up to the directive side of his mind to give him a frame of reference that was God’s point of view. He lost all divine viewpoint though he was a high church man who was a leader in his denomination.

Once more, Dr. Unger, concerning Bishop Pike says, “Bishop Pike lost sight of this when he asserted that the severe scriptural injunctions are of little help to us today for our world view is so different. Actually, the bishop meant that his world view did not conform to the world view of the Old Testament. Since the bishop had indeed renounced the authority of the Word of God, the scriptural warnings had no effect in deterring him from the snare of the occult. The bishop’s abandoned spirit-oriented Christianity in favor of spiritistically-oriented religion, which retained a Christian aura. He had such little spiritual insight that he criticized Christians for not welcoming mediumistic communications with the dead as exciting evidence of life beyond the grave.

“Pike’s Christian background makes his error all the more subtle and dangerous. It’s deception all the more, luring in undetectable, and its expose all the more imperative. Satan’s masquerade as an angel of light is far more destructive than his forays as a devouring lion.”

As you remember perhaps, Bishop Pike’s son Jim committed suicide. Then a series of things began taking place in the flat in Cambridge, England. Things that the spirit world refers to as levitation. Things being moved about. And signs that eventually led step-by-step to Bishop Pike going to a medium in an attempt to contact his dead whom he felt was trying to leave signals behind in his room in various ways to indicate that he was trying to get in touch with him. And sure enough he sat down with a medium and spoke to a voice from the spirit world. One time in Canada on national television hook-up. If you are interested you might pursue the full details on the hauntings of Bishop Pike by Dr. Merrill Unger.

Our point this morning is that this is a great reality, and Bishop Pike brought speaking to the dead to a new height of interest and zeal on the part of devotees of spiritistic cults. Dr. Pike had rejected the account of Saul and the Medium of Endor as a biased account, though it is God’s great expose on the fraudulence of spiritism today. Had he paid attention to this record in Scripture, it would have preserved him from what may well have been in his case the sin unto death as he died out in the Judean desert pursuing the historic Jesus that he rejected on the pages of Scripture.

Isaiah 8:19 tells us, and when they shall say unto you, seek unto those who are mediums, and unto wizards (male fortune tellers) that peep and that mutter, should not a people seek unto their god? Should they seek on behalf of the living to the dead? What kind of sense is this that we who are the living should look to the dead for guidance instead of to the living God?

Verse 20 says, “To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Necromancy can lead to the sin of death (1 Chronicles 10:13), which perhaps was the case of Bishop Pike’s situation. The sin of death is a sin, it can be any kind of sin, that you have gone so far in building up spiritual callouses upon the soul that you are completely insensitive to God and to man, and God will take the believer home to heaven.

Alright, here’s a summary about necromancy: Number 1, people conducting séances do not contact the dead (Luke 16:27-31). In the case of Lazarus and the rich man that you have described there, the rich man said, “Please send Lazarus back from the dead to warn my brothers that hell is a reality.” He was denied this request because the dead cannot speak to the living, but he was reminded that they do have the Word of God from which to learn.

Number 2, it is not possible or necessary to communicate with the dead. Doctrine through the Holy Spirit gives us full guidance.

Number 3, believers who have died are in the Lord’s presence separated from all past and happiness on earth. Dead people thus do not see those of us who are on the earth. Dead people do not listen in to the conversations of the living. Demons do watch and they do listen.

Number 4, attempts to communicate with the dead are forbidden because it means contact with demons. And you have many verses that forbid this practice (Leviticus 19:13, 26, 27, Deuteronomy 18:9-12, 2 Kings 23:24, 1 Timothy 4:1).

People who do contact the spirit world during a séance are therefore communicating with a demon who controls the mediums vocal cords (Isaiah 8:19, Isaiah 29:4).

Please take your Bibles and let’s turn to the only time that a person ever spoke with someone from the dead, 1 Samuel 28. This is the story of King Saul and the Medium of Endor. 1 Samuel 28:3. Here is the historical situation. “Now Samuel was dead and all Israel was dead had lamented him and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those who were mediums and wizards out of the land.” Samuel, the last of the great judges out of Israel was dead. The nation greatly mourned his passing. As a priest, Samuel had communicated the written word as an exegete.

By the way, this word “exegesis” means simply explaining the Word of God. A person who explains the Word of God is an “exegete.” This is the work of the pastor teacher. The word “exegesis” means explaining the Word, expository preaching. This is what Samuel did with the written word, and as a prophet Samuel communicated the spoken Word of God with direct revelations. Samuel’s presence with Bible doctrine had served to restrain King Saul from the satanic activity that he was inclined to.

King Saul was out of temporal fellowship. He was a psychotic of the manic depressive type. He fluctuated with his fears and with his highs and his lows of emotion. With Samuel gone, the line of communication with God was gone. Saul proceeds immediately to get worse. Saul had realized, however, the influence of demonic activity on the nation, so he had earlier purged the nation of Israel from those who were practicing spiritism. He had imposed the death penalty on anybody who was practicing necromancy. The mediums that you have here (or in your authorized version it says “familiar spirit”)—these people who had a familiar spirit are described by the Hebrew word is “ob.” This is a familiar spirit and this is what a person who practices contacting the dead is said to have. He has an “ob.”

Now the Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew. From previous centuries to give us some insight as to what the Hebrew words meant, the Greek uses the word “eggastrimuthos.” This was a ventriloquist. That’s what the word means. An “eggastrimuthos” demon is a ventriloquist demon, and it was the word used to translate the Old Testament word “ob.” So what we have indicated from the Septuagint translators is a person who is possessed by a demonic spirit that can supposedly communicate with the dead is a ventriloquist demon. He’s speaking to a demon who’s mimicking the voice, the mannerisms, and the information that he has concerning somebody that the medium is trying to contact. It conveys the idea of projecting the voice as if it were originating from another person. Demons speaking for a dead person.

Isaiah chapter 8 verse 19 uses this same word “ob,” and it describes what these ventriloquist demons do. Isaiah 8:19 says, “When they shall say unto you, ‘Seek unto those who are mediums (or who have an “ob,” who have an “eggastrimuthos” demon) and unto wizards that peep and that mutter.’” They are described as those who peep and mutter. They chirp and squeak because they are mimicking sounds. That’s the idea. People who mimic sounds. They are mimicking the voices and the sounds of other people.

In Isaiah 29:4 there is another description of this. “And thou shall be brought down and shall speak out of the ground and thy speech shall be low out of the dust and thy voice shall be like an ‘ob’ (again, an “eggastrimuthos”) out of the ground and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.” You have the picture here of this ventriloquist demon throwing his voice so that the person seems to be speaking naturally from the ground where we view that the dead are. They have this chirping and muttering and mimicking of sounds. That’s exactly the words that the Scriptures use to describe this.

In Samuel 28 we’re also told that Saul not only got rid of the mediums who had the “ob” but also the wizards. The wizards are the “yidoni.” These are “the knowing ones.” Thus they are the work of the fortune teller. The “yidoni” are the ones who have the means of knowing. They have secrets from the unseen world. This is used in the bad sense in the Old Testament of the false prophets. They are called the “yidoni,” the wizards.

Now this fact concerning Saul is noted to us after telling us that Samuel is dead. Then it tells us that Saul has gotten rid of people who could contact the dead through the “ob” spirit, and through those wizards who had “knowledge” of the spirit world. Saul killed them or drove them underground. And this is told us as background for the story that follows here. We want you to notice that Saul once was a man of positive volition. He once said “yes” to God just like you may have once said “yes” to God.

Verse 4 tells us, “The Philistines gathered themselves together and came and encamped in Shunem, and Saul gathered all Israel together and they encamped in Gilboa.” The two armies were in visual contact. Here’s the condition of Saul as the Philistines were mobilizing to attack him.

Verse 5 says, “And when Saul saw the hosts of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.” Remember that Saul is a believer. He is out of temporal fellowship.

**Temporal Fellowship / Spirituality**

Temporal fellowship can be illustrated with two concentric circles (one within another). The outer circle is eternal fellowship. You enter this at the point of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. The inner circle is temporal fellowship. You enter that circle also immediately upon salvation. Upon willful sin, you leave that inner circle. Sin takes you out. You have now left the point of spirituality. The inner circle connotes spirituality. Being out of the inner circle connotes carnality. You do not leave your salvation. You do not leave your eternal fellowship. But you do leave this inner temporal fellowship. You no longer have fellowship with God in time. Your prayers are nothing. Your service is nothing. You cannot produce divine good. You produce nothing but human good in the carnal state. Confession of sin brings you back in as per 1 John 1:9, into that inner circle where you are again productive of divine good.

Well, what Saul had done was that he had sinned through several mental attitude sins, particularly toward David, and it had popped him as a believer out of the inner circle and he was now out of temporal fellowship. He had jealousy and anger and hatred and vindictiveness toward David, and he was even trying to take his life. He refused to confess, so the directive side of his mind was completely cut off from information from God, and he was out here in the realm of carnality, completely cut off from the living God.

So it was natural, under that condition, when he sees the forces gathered against him, that he should fear. A person whose directive mind has been neutralized is a person who will be fearful. There can be no courage in battle. Battle courage stems from having a mind that is in communication with God. When a mind is out of fellowship with God, there is no relaxed mental attitude, then we are paralyzed. So battle courage had been knocked out of Saul, though he had defeated these very Philistines many times in the past. He lacked any sense of divine viewpoint as to what he should do concerning the imminent attack.

Verse 6 says he makes a decision. “Then Saul inquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim nor by prophets.” In the Old Testament, God had three ways of answering and giving information before the Old Testament canon (the Old Testament scripture) was completed. One was by dreams—God speaking to a person through visions. Secondly was by means of the Urim. The word “Urim” in Hebrew means lights. On the breastplate of the high priest were a series of stones—squares divided into twelve, each square representing one tribe. A God spoke and delivered His mind to the people through the high priest, these squares would light up. The Urim would give signals through a code that they understood as to what God was saying. Leviticus 8:8 tells you about this breastplate. Leviticus 27:21 tells you how it was illuminated. But none of this happened.

Along with the Urim was also the “Thummin.” The Thummin was a “yes and no” device of some kind, perhaps on the shoulders of the high priest. The high priest could go before God and say, “Should we go to battle with the Philistines?” And left shoulder “no” would light up, or right shoulder “yes” would light up. Or they would say, “Are we going to be victorious in the battler?” And God would say “yes” or “no” by the light. So through the Urim and the Thummin, God expressed His intentions and desires very clearly.

But this was cut off from Saul. We’re told that there was nothing. He was cut off from any visions. He was cut off from Urim and Thummin. And he was also cut off from prophets. Samuel was dead. The only people that surrounded him were the National Council of Churches type, and they had no genuine communication line with God. So God gave no communication to Saul through the three media that generally were available.

He makes a decision, verse 7. Saul decides to consult a medium. So Saul said unto his servants, “Seek me a woman who is a medium (that is, one who has the spirit of an ‘ob)’ 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 Endor.’” Literally this means “a woman who is a mistress of a conjuring spirit.” That’s what it means. “Find me a woman who is a mistress of a conjuring spirit—a spirit which can bring up the dead. I have the desire to speak with her to get some information; that I may inquire of her.” Yet, Leviticus 19:31 strictly forbids this. The servants say, “We know a medium. She’s at Endor.”

In verse 8, Saul disguises himself, takes two aides with him, and they go by night to the residence of the medium. He says to her, “I pray thee, divine unto me as a medium and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee.” “Divine unto me” means bring up the dead person from Sheol through a spirit. He’s asking this woman to practice necromancy. Saul says, “I’ll tell you who I want you to bring up.” The person is going to be, of course, Samuel.

Verse 9 tells us that the woman hesitates to hold a séance. She reminds the disguised Saul, whom she does not know to be the king, that King Saul has passed an edict that has placed the death penalty upon anybody who holds a séance. It is strictly forbidden. So the woman fears for her life and she also fears that this might be a trap. She’s not quite sure who these men are that have come to her.

In verse 10 Saul proceeds to take an oath, and of all things, by whom? You’ll notice he takes an oath by the Lord, that is, by Jehovah. Saying, “As the Lord liveth there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.” Using the most sacred name, the name “Jehovah,” the most sacred name of God, to take an oath promising immunity for what Jehovah himself has forbidden under penalty of death—contact with a demon spirit to speak to the dead. So it shows how great had become the buildup of callouses on the soul of Saul. He was nearly to the point where he was ready for the execution of the sin unto death. Negative volition to doctrine and demon influence are closely allied, and I hope you have caught that. Negative volition to doctrine and demon influence are closely related.

In verse 11 the medium seems to be satisfied so she agrees to hold a séance. The woman says, “Who do you want me to contact?” And the demon who possesses the woman proceeds to get ready to respond. So Saul says, “I want to speak to Samuel.” And the woman proceeds with her séance. She’s going to contact this ventriloquist demon. Now these two have probably worked together before. The demon already knew, by eavesdropping, what King Saul wanted, so he had the file out and everything was ready to go.

The woman begins the séance. She goes through her routine before Saul and these men. They’re sitting there around the table, maybe holding hands. It’s already night. They put the lights down, and the woman goes through her pitch. “Oh, demon world. Great and magnificent spirit speak to us if you are there. We desire oh great prophet Samuel. Come to us Samuel. We are waiting for you. We are waiting. We listen.”

Then at that point, normally, the demon would come up to the microphone and say, “Yeah, this is Samuel here. I’m flying in at 36,000 feet through broken overcast. Our ground temperature is now 75 degrees. We are coming rather rapidly. All four engines have fallen off and we’ll be on the ground very soon now.” Then he proceeds to carry on the discussion with her.

But suddenly, while she’s going through her routine, and waiting for the demon to make his pitch, something goes wrong. Something goes fantastically wrong. God interrupts the séance. He converts the fake presentation of talking to the dead with a real communication with the dead, and causes Samuel to materialize right before her eyes. Now apparently, Saul did not see the apparition, but she did. The only time in history that anyone has ever contacted the dead. As we said with Lazarus and the rich man, he was not permitted to go back.

So the demon is also aware of what’s happening, but he’s unable to stop it. He can’t stop what’s happening. The woman sees the apparition and suddenly she knows how they operate, and she knows that this is the real thing, and she’s filled with alarm and horror. So the medium screams in terror. You can probably imagine this poor demon who is getting ready to do his part and suddenly he sees what’s happening. He knows that things have gone out of control. He’s in a panic. He’s probably calling and sending signals back to Satan, “I need some help up here.” And suddenly while he’s centering on the apparition, this woman sends out a blood-curdling scream. You can just imagine that demon turning and saying, “Don’t do that. Things are bad enough without you scaring the wits out of me with that screaming.”

But she was terrified because of what was happening. The whole demon army of Satan was not able to stop what God was doing. In her state of clairvoyance, now that she was under the demon’s control, she suddenly became aware of who her customer was. She not only saw Samuel appearing, but because she was now under the demon’s control, she had demon-influenced information, and she knew who it was that was sitting across the table; that it was, of all people, King Saul, the very one who had passed the edict. Therefore she breaks out in a rebuke against the king.

Now the demon probably had kept this information from the woman in order to be able to use her to give Saul the direction that Satan wanted him to have, so he could control him. Now, perhaps, the demon seeing that things had gotten out of control, leveled with her in order to calm her outburst. She in hysterics rebukes the king for asking her to do the very thing that he had forbidden.

So verse 12 says, “And when the woman saw Samuel she cried with a loud voice and the woman spoke to Saul saying, ‘Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul?’ And the king said unto her, ‘Be not afraid. What sawest thou?’” Saul reassures her and says, “Tell me, what do you see?”

And she says, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth.” Now the word “gods” here is our old word “Elohim,” which is the plurality name of God, and is used sometimes of pagan gods as well as of the true God, indicating the Trinity, in the plurality of this word. But what she is saying is not, “I see God here,” nor even “false gods.” What she is saying is, “I see a celestial spirit being coming up, and coming up appropriately out of the earth,” because that’s where Samuel was. He was in the Paradise section of Sheol where the Old Testament dead resided. And she says, “I see a being, a celestial being, coming out of the earth—a god-like form, out of the abode of the dead.”

Verse 14 says, “And he said unto her, ‘What form is he of?’ And she said, ‘An old man cometh up and he is covered up with a mantel.’” She gives a description of the figure she sees. He’s an old man and he’s wrapped in a mantel, which in Hebrew is “meil.” A “meil” is a robe that a person of dignity, a person of VIP, wears. And Saul immediately recognizes this as the prophet’s mantel, such as Samuel usually wore in life (1 Samuel 15:27). So he’s here in this “meil,” like a robe on him, and immediately they recognize who he is. He says, “It’s Samuel.” “And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped his face to the ground and bowed himself.” He bowed down to Samuel in reverence. He apparently has not seen the apparition. He’s expressing respect toward the very one to whom he was negative.

Now comes the most fantastic confrontation between a living person and a dead person. Saul’s confrontation with Samuel. I find this one of the most informative, one of the most instructive areas of Scripture. A couple of weeks ago, something struck me here that I had not noticed or put together before concerning the matter of negative volition and how God views this, and the results of it. Is it a thing of any great importance when you decide that you don’t like one local church, you don’t like teaching, teacher, or the technique of that church, and you decide to go to some other church? Is there a problem the next time you walk down the street, and the person who once sat there no longer is there and has departed? What should your conduct be on that occasion?

I’ll tell you something right now. If you miss the boat on that issue, and you let human judgment be your guide, you are removing yourself from some eternal rewards. I see more Christians who go carnal and who destroy eternal rewards and their divine good at this point because they don’t know what to do with the person who walked out of their assembly. They don’t know what to do when they meet this person again. They don’t know what to do with this person. But this passage is a divine revelation of exactly what God expects you to do. It puts in perspective as no other Scripture that I know of at the moment, what God thinks concerning saying “no” to the truth.

Now we’re not talking about saying “no” to what is not the truth. We’re not talking about saying “no” as the Scripture says, “Test it. Hold fast that which is true.” We’re not talking about some preacher who is telling you which is not true. We’re not talking about some teaching which is false. We’re not talking about some church which is all involved in some kind of action program which is contrary to the Word of God. We’re talking about an operation that God says, “Yes sir, you’re in phase with me. You’re in phase in your teaching. You’re in phase in your teacher. You’re in phase in your technique.” Now when you move from that situation, you have taken the most dramatic act of negative volition for which God brings the most disastrous judgments. You had better understand this because we have a lot of “love everybody” disorientation in the mentalities of Christians on this issue alone, especially here where we have such good manners like we do in the South. Our good manners, our human viewpoint good manners become our guide in dealing with people in this situation.

We’re going to pick up the story here next week and we’re going to look at the dramatic confrontation between a living person and a dead person—the only time it happened.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971