

8714-U

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 2000

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

THE FUGITIVE BECOMES KING

Speaker: Bro. David Pride

Study #5: Thou art as an Angel of God

Readings: 1 Samuel 27 to 30

Would you have your bibles open please, b&s, to Psalm 34. My dear brethren and sisters, one of the finest things that emerges in the study of the man after God's own heart, is that he's a man sensitive to the divine will. He's got some very sensitive issues to deal with in our study this morning, b&s, because he'd been in Gath before, you'll remember. The Philistines' city of Gath, he'd gone there before we've read of this in 1 Samuel 21, it's the time when he had to feign madness before Achish, king of Gath. And this man, sensitive to the divine will, must have felt very much demeaned as Yahweh's anointed, to find himself groveling in a sense before the uncircumcised Philistine there in Gath, in the city of Goliath, he, as Yahweh's anointed himself, feigning madness. And he's an unwelcome visitor in Gath on that first occasion, b&s, because his reputation had preceded him, they would say of him, 'is not this the king of the land'? So even the Philistines knew that he was Yahweh's anointed, just waiting in the wings as it were, to take the throne. They said he's the king of the land, and David because of the sensitivity of this situation, would feign himself to be a madman, and Achish would say, 'Why do I need madmen?' and expel him from the city of Gath altogether!

Now there is a psalm, and it's the psalm you have open before you and it was written after this experience: I like to think of this as kind of a statement of faith, b&s, for David. Not just for David, of course, it's for us as well, isn't it? a statement of resolve, a statement that says, 'I'll press on in the good hand of God', so let's look at Psalm 34 as we begin, because David says there that 'I will bless Yahweh at all times'. Now that's a great statement of faith, (and may I say to you in this kind of statement, b&s, we have to set the resolve, we have to get the goal in mind, and we have to walk toward it). And this has to be the kind of resolve that may be, and we can look at the situation of David and say, 'but it wasn't at all time!', and that's the story of our lives, isn't it? It doesn't diminish in any way, this great statement of faith and this great resolve, which we ourselves have to take hold of! Yes, 'I will bless Yahweh at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in Yahweh': (and the boasting

there, b&s, I'll just tell you, it's not like the boast that we'd say one is bragging; but the boast here is to shine forth to the glory of Yahweh (1984), that's the essence of the meaning of that word 'boast' there. So 'to make his boast in Yahweh, the humble shall hear thereof and be glad' (and then as though there was an invitation to us all, just to join him in this resolve, in this great statement of faith), he says, 'O magnify Yahweh with me' (join David in this) 'and let us exalt His name together'. The great name of Yahweh, b&s, we exalt that, we magnify it, we lift it up, and David is telling us, join him in this, make this part of your resolve (and so we will do); and so he says, 'I sought Yahweh and He heard me; and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto Him and were lightened and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried and Yahweh heard him; and saved him out of all his troubles'. What a wonderful thing to say, b&s, when we think of the experiences of David, just in this part of the study up to this point, and how many times you have to cry out and receive the deliverance of Yahweh and be able to say, 'Yes, He saved me out of everything, out of all my troubles'.

And this is the way it was through the fugitive years, b&s, David's recognition, his sensitivity to the divine will, even in the adverse conditions of his life. In this psalm and verse 15 you read this, (you see David and Saul here in the psalm, verse 15 is David) 'The eyes of Yahweh are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry'. (Then you see Saul), 'The face of Yahweh is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth' (David and Saul right there in this psalm). So many God given, yes, they were God-given opportunities that were placed before David, to kill Saul. A great trial, wasn't it? and he had to recognize that Yahweh really is in control, and Saul is Yahweh's anointed and that Saul's fate is in Yahweh's hand. Now just go to 1 Samuel chapter 26 just to refresh our memories on this, this is the perspective of David; we spoke about his relationship to Saul in his respect for Saul, his respect for the position, I think the respect that we've seen right along is for the position of Saul as Yahweh's anointed. Here's David's perspective about Saul, he knows Saul's days are going to come to an end, but he knows full well it rests in Yahweh's hand and not his. So in verse 10 of chapter 26, 'David said furthermore, As Yahweh liveth, Yahweh shall smite him, or his days shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish' (so interesting the way the words are, b&s, as Saul would descend into battle; Saul is always descending). Strange word when you think about it, that he should descend into battle and die, because he doesn't 'descend' at all, he actually goes into the slopes of Mount Gilboa, he's ascending, but the spiritual perspective is that he's descending into battle (3381) and he will die. And so it will be!

But for all of this, and through all the time that we've considered up to now, we just can't help but wonder, how much can one man take? Perhaps you've found yourself there, you just express the fact, 'I just can't take anymore of this!' perhaps you can just reach out to David now with a sensitivity of our minds and hearts, and just ask that question with him, 'how much can one man take?' This is the shepherd, b&s, that has the sheep around him now, and he can't find the green pastures, he can't lead them by the still waters, they're trapped in the valley, as it were, of the shadow of death and they can't see anyway out. It's as though the wolves have encircled the sheep, and they just draw

back a little bit, only to

come again. And on and on it goes, and I think we can well feel for David, the despair that would just creep into his heart and mind; as this just continued to go on and on, a kind of depression that just settles into his spirit. He begins to talk to himself, it's always dangerous when one begins to talk to themselves, b&s, isn't it? a dangerous course.

Just look at the way chapter 27 begins! 'And David said in his heart' (he's communing with himself here, b&s, and when we start communing with our heart which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, we may be in trouble. So it was with David, David said in his heart 'I shall now perish one day, by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand'. A strange turn of events for David here I think, from what we've come to know of David; the immensity of faith that we see in the life of David under the worst of situations, and now, he sounds a bit like Nabal actually, doesn't he? 6 times here, interesting that it's 6, isn't it? the number of flesh. But 6 times here he says, 'I or me', troubled on every side. 'Without were fightings, within were fears', that's the way the apostle Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians. Let's not fall into a trap here, b&s, alright? we're looking at a situation where it seems that David is going off in the wrong direction, and he is; he should have known better, and that's what we say when we look at these examples, and we know how many times he's been spared, how many times Yahweh has delivered, how many times the circumstances are so unusual you can only see the divine hand, and our tendency is to say, 'he should have known better!' Let's be careful here, we need to be careful here, I think, because if we take that approach, are we not condemning ourselves? Because, that's what sin is, you see, we should have known better, that's what sin is! It's a long period of stress that David's been under; he's only 28 years old here (I don't say, only 28 as though it's diminishing the aspect of the age; there are many here in this room that are 28 or under) and you can rise to great spiritual heights in Christ at a very young age, but to be 28 years old and to have gone through all the things that David had suffered up to now, by way of trial and circumstance, is a remarkable thing. To be a leader, one who had moulded a group together and held them together through these fugitive years, is a remarkable thing, b&s. He's only 28 years old, and where's the light at the end of the tunnel, and it goes on and on and on; I'm not making excuses for David here, I'm not making excuses, what we're trying to do is just take a sensitive approach and make a sensitive attempt to see David as a brother, as our brother, struggling to be right! This is what he's doing, he's striving for Yahweh and the kingdom; we need to see ourselves in that struggle along with him, b&s. We need to enter into this!

Now for us! We don't doubt the faithfulness of our God, do we? I mean, we've responded to His calling, we've been baptized into the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Has your foot ever slipped from the path? I don't think anyone here could stand up and say, 'my foot has never slipped from the path since the day I responded to God's calling and was baptized into the saving name of Christ. I think it's safe to say that! Have you ever felt despair, b&s? when you feel like somehow you've entered into

the valley of the shadow of death? you can't see the light on the other side! And we know the scripture, we know the words of David, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley' (that's the message) you don't stay in the valley in God's good care, b&s, but He brings us through to the other side. But sometimes we just feel like we're trapped in that valley; I think everyone of us has been there and felt that! You see, it's not just about this man's weakness or his weaknesses, our consolation is bound up in this, that God brought him through the darkness, that He brought him out of the valley; He will do the same for us, and we may have to discover the truth of this, perhaps some of the younger ones sitting here have never felt this, and you may have to discover the truth of this! And for some who have entered into situations that are so dark, b&s, God will bring us through, but it may not be till Jesus comes! but He will bring us through!

But David says here, 'There is nothing better for me to do, than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines', these are strange words for him. He'd been there before and it had been a disaster and now he's talking about going back to the same area (10 years older now than this young man who had said at one point in time, 'who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that defies the army of the living God?', and he stood before that mountain of flesh and he slew him; with the good hand of God he slew him. In verse 2 we read this, 'And David arose' (and it sounds, you know, bro. Ron talks to us about the bible echoes, and there's a little bible echo here, because it sounds very much like Lot going down to Sodom) 'And David arose, and passed over with the 600 men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife (I would say that's the right order, b&s, by the way, and I won't expand that at all, other than to tell you that's the right order for the wives; it's not what you find at the end of the whole account of Abigail, it sounds like it's almost the other way around, but this is the correct order, and you can research that and do a little homework on your own and I think you'll come to that conclusion, and it'll make you feel better about the way that chapter about Abigail comes to an ending).

Well, it worked, b&s, verse 4, 'It was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him', so David's design in that really worked, didn't it? Saul drew back and would not venture into the area of the Philistines, because he knew that this was not territory where he wanted to go, even after David. So it worked but there was a great cost involved for David and for his men. A great cost! he didn't inquire of Yahweh, he didn't go to Abiathar and say, 'bring the ephod and we'll go through the course of Urim and Thummim; there's no voice from Gad the seer giving him any kind of instruction or direction. It's a great undertaking, a great undertaking! this is a migration that's going to take place, (you remember David is down in this area of the wilderness of Ziph, the wilderness of Maon, the area of En-gedi where the strongholds are, close toward the area of the Dead Sea, and this is his base of operation). Now the migration has got to take place all the way over to Gath, probably a distance of about 30 to 35 miles; but it's not just 600 men now, you see, because there are the wives of these men, there are the children, the numbers or ranks could have swelled to as many as 2,000

(that's just a guess, but it could be that!) this is a sizeable group, a cumbersome group to move 30 to 35 miles especially through this territory where there are people who are willing to turn David over at a moment's notice. But he's going to do this, he's going to migrate to the land of the Philistines from the wilderness of Judah. Quite a testimony really to the character of David here, b&s; that even under great duress, and when he himself was manifesting the despair and the distress of the moment, that these people trusted him enough, to allow him to shepherded them this great distance, to a place that was foreign to them, a place which represented the enemy territory, yet because David was the shepherd, they become the sheep and follow along and go with him. It's a great testimony to the character of David, to the dangerous journey, and they followed along.

And they come to Achish king of Gath, the city of Goliath as we said, 'what a strange thing'. Now 'Achish' may be a title, he's called Abimelech in other places and it's like a title. I'll call him Achish, I feel this is the same man that David feigned madness in front of, and now he sees David as one that is cured from whatever malady of madness he possessed, and now he's a leader of a sizeable army, small but powerful, and it could be of benefit to him, and so he allows him to just kind of enter into the city of Gath. Of course, David couldn't stay there, b&s, could he? he couldn't function under the eyes of the king and the people of this city, and so he's got to petition Achish, to give him some town in the country he says; a quaint little expression, 'just give me a town in the country', and Achish gives him Ziklag to the south of Judah, and just to point this out, it's way over to the western portion of the area where David's fugitive years were spent for the most part, but now he and this band of people that are with him, are going to reside in the city of Ziklag, and David is going to become the barrier, the protective barrier, for the southern area of Philistia, or at least Achish thought so! So it's a very convenient thing for him as well, to give David this place to the south, and that would kind of protect that particular area. Well in 1 Samuel 27 and verse 7, 'The time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months'. That's a long time for anyone to dwell in the country of the Philistines, it's a long time! it had to be a time of deceit, it had to be a time of guile, we can't admire these things, b&s. David's caught up in this and oh, what a tangled web we weave. You know the saying, 'and first we practice to deceive' and David is just caught up in the tangled web of this whole practice of deceit, just in order to maintain himself and his people there, and I guess we would have to say that deceit is necessary, if we are going to choose to live in the land of the Philistines, for us or for David. It's sad to be caught up in that from time to time, isn't it? It would have a tremendous negative effect spiritually, and it will on David as it will on us and has on us if we've chosen to follow a course like that!

There are a number of Psalms that are attributed to the fugitive years, I wish I could show you one here, b&s. There are none for the year and four months when David is in with the Philistines, there just aren't any; that will tell you a little bit of the negative effect that this had on David. David's policy was a hard policy during this time period, it was built on the deceit of what he was doing; he dealt very subtly Saul had said on one occasion, and subtlety was very much a part of what he was doing here now in the land

of the Philistines. And this man with an active conscience, I can't see him not being troubled by the whole situation as time went along, it's like how do you break the pattern? how do you get out of this? and he's caught in it. On the first occasion in Gath, we read from Psalm 34, he wrote that psalm to deal with that area where he feigned madness there in Gath, and he wrote in psalm 34, 'Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile' in verse 13 of that psalm. He knew what it meant to do this, he knew that Achish was deceived, he was then and he still is! and the policy of David involved brutal raids, b&s, the only way we can describe it, they were brutal raids; where not one person of a city was left alive. Now we could say it's the age old enemies of Israel, and so it is, and he's doing what Joshua did when Joshua went into the land and so he was; the Amalekites were the prime target they say they shouldn't have been there, anyway. But he conducts his raids, he returns to Achish with the spoil (and you can almost picture this king of Gath, an older man than David, putting his arm around the young man's shoulder, this young soldier's shoulder and saying, 'how did it go today?' and they're going to just converse back and forth over the successes of the moment.

That's exactly what happened, b&s! You'll notice verse 10, of chapter 27 'Achish said, Whither have you made a road today?' And David would answer him, 'Against the south of Judah and against the south of the Jerahmeelites and against the south of the Kenites'. And there's deceit in that, b&s, he's telling Achish this, he's saying, 'I went from Ziklag and I stayed in the southern area of Judah and I took these cities and I destroyed them all; here's the spoil of the cities'. Well, it was the south of the Jerahmeelites, it was the south of Judah, it was south of the Kenites, and yes it was south; you see, that's kind of a half truth here, but that's the deceit of the occasion, isn't it? It was to the south, but it's much further to the south because he was going against the Amalekites. What does it say in verse 8, 'The Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites', and it speaks about the way that goeth down to Shur (the way that goeth down to Shur is one of the highways that would lead down into Egypt, down into this section here); he was going down south alright, he was south of these other areas, this part was true. But it was not the places that he had named as the target! and Achish accepted this and said, 'well done' and accepted all the spoil that went along with it; but there's guile involved in this and we can't be content with that b&s, but this is what happens when you get involved in the land of the Philistines, you can't help but be this way.

As chapter 28 begins, the Philistines are about to mount an all out offensive against Israel and David is going to have a terrible problem right now, because the army of Achish is going to be part of this. You know, the 5 cities of the Philistines are these 5 cities along the coast (we mentioned them before) Gath is prominent and this is probably the chief city; David is associated with Gath and with Achish, he's got to be a part of this force that marches to the north against the armies of Israel. It's a great problem for David; imagine the concerns that were in his mind at this point in time, 'what's he going to do?' 'how could he fight against Yahweh's people?' and it's a great dilemma marching with the Philistines. David's got to be a part, he's a little wing of Achish's army in a sense, b&s, we can think of it this way. And Achish says to him in

effect, 'you're going to go with me, David! and not only that, I'm going to make you the keeper of my head'. David must have recoiled a bit by that, because he'd think of Abner and Saul, and he's going to play the part of Abner now for Achish, he's going to be his personal bodyguard, the keeper of his head. What turmoil for this man after God's own heart, my dear b&s, just imagine the thoughts that would be racing through his mind. 'What concord hath Christ, what concord hath the Anointed (and he was the anointed) with Belial?' and now he has to have concord, he has to have fellowship, he has to have affinity with Belial and the works of darkness in his march against God's people.

He's joined them, it's a great dilemma! and David's army was growing, soldiers had come to him at Ziklag, and you can read of this in 1 Chronicles chapter 12, it was a formidable, fighting force that Achish could look at and say, 'they will help, they will help in the battle', and they're going to march to the north against Israel together. All this is going on, but what is Saul doing, b&s? Well, look at verse 4 and 5 of the 28th chapter, 'And the Philistines gathered themselves together (and this is jumping ahead a bit in time, it's leaving David and it's going to tell us about Saul and how it's going to focus into a certain area. We're going to pick up the threads with David but we just want to see what Saul's doing while all this is going on). The Philistines gathered themselves together and came and pitched in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together and they pitched in Gilboa, which takes us in our thoughts, far to the north, the area of Shunem, Gilboa, the valley of Jezreel, the valley of history, of history past and history to come. This is where the battle will be fought and the troops are gathering here, Saul's at Gilboa and the Philistine troops will be at Shunem.

But there are things that are happening with David which we'll have to place aside for the moment, and we'll have to pick them up again. Verse 5, 'When Saul saw the host of the Philistines he was afraid and his heart greatly trembled'; we can well imagine, can't we? the feelings of Saul at this point in time. Let's just skip ahead and see what's happening with David! David needs a great deliverance, b&s, a great deliverance! Remember how the Philistines had saved them back in chapter 23, how the Philistines had invaded the land and Saul turned away, and in a sense, the Philistines saved David, of course, it was the hand of Yahweh. We could say the Philistines in the hand of Yahweh are going to save David again.

Great deliverance! In 1 Samuel 29 and verse 1, is the march to the north, alright? they're heading up to the north now, the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel' (so it brings the Israelites' focus up to Jezreel; the Philistines have gathered their forces and have come up as far as Aphek which is this location here on your maps, and there's a pause, a kind of a pause in the action here, because Achish and his forces and David and his men, are in what the scripture says is (well, let's read it in verse 2) 'the lords of the Philistines passed by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish' (and brethren when you read that, that is 'rearward' it's not 'rereward' as though there's going to be a second reward of something or other, it just means they're in the back of the ranks, in the rear, not spelled quite the way we'd like to

have it, but that's what it means). It's rearward so they're in the back of the ranks, they're way in the back are Achish and David and his men. And the other Philistine leaders become aware of the fact that they've got a pretty sizeable group of soldiers from Israel marching with them. It doesn't matter whether they're allies or not, they're there because their allies, but they're going to reject that concept. They're horrified at the presence of David and they're furious with Achish, they call David an adversary, which is the word 'satan', they say David's a 'satan' amongst us! and he's going to use this occasion to be reconciled to his master. And he's going to do it by giving Saul our heads!

They knew David's reputation, they knew the song about David killing the tens of thousands; and Achish, of course, has to yield to the majority of the lords of the Philistines and he would do this, he has no choice but to do this! He's going to send David home, praising David instead of gushing over David in a way, I guess we'd call it in a modern vernacular here, 'he's stroking David', he's trying to make him feel good as he just sends him on his way and rejects him from the army. He's telling him he has to go for the sake of peace; we won't read through all the parts of this, but just look at verse 9, b&s, 'And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God.' David must have been a bit disturbed when he heard that, don't you think, b&s? The Hebrew word is 'malak' (4397) for angel, that's the common word for angel in the Old Testament, and he's a 'messenger' (it's built into the Malachi name, isn't it?) but he's saying you've been like a messenger of the Elohim; and David knows the message that he's been giving Achish, day in and day out, he knows the message was a message of deceit, he knows he's on very shaky ground in the land of the Philistines. And I don't think David would have had to fake an injured expression on his face at this point in time, he would be hurting as Achish sends him on his way. And David's little army will head to the south, while the host of the Philistines head northward; they're going to divide it at Aphek, the main force of the Philistines will head up to the valley of Jezreel and David and his men are going to head to the south, on their way back to Ziklag. It's about a 3 day journey for this army to get back to Ziklag, b&s, it must have been a great time for David and his troops, again, as though the Philistines in the hand of Yahweh had saved David and his men. And they go on their way, I'm sure, they'd go on their way rejoicing, because they're going home, there's going to be a reunion with their wives and with their children. A time of great joy! there must have been a lot of laughter along the way, but b&s, the joy was about to turn to ashes! because when they got to the place that was their home, there would be no wives there, there would be no sons, there would be no daughters, there would be no city, because Ziklag had been burned to the ground. See, the Amalekites had gotten there first!

They'd burnt it to the ground, and these men and David too, would just be overcome with the scene, b&s, they just fall into weeping over the situation. They didn't know what had happened, they didn't know if their wives were dead or alive, their children dead or alive? and they would weep and weep and weep till there was no more strength in them and they couldn't even weep anymore. And then they'd look at David the shepherd, and

they'd say 'we've got to stone this man! this man who's suppose to lead us is responsible for this'. You can imagine the state of David's mind at this point in time, how distraught he would be, b&s, over the whole situation and over the fact that his two wives were taken as well. And David's at the bottom, he's right at the bottom here now and he's going to do something that there is no record of him doing in the year and four months that he's with the Philistines. It's an important turning point, we should mark this, b&s, because it's an important turning point for us as well. Just look at verse 6 of the 30th chapter, David's greatly distressed but at the end of that verse it says, 'But David encouraged himself in Yahweh his God', and it's a great turning point for him; that's the only place to turn, b&s, to Yahweh our God! How did he do it? He went to the high priest, right to Abiathar to bring the ephod so he could inquire of Yahweh. He could have rushed off like he did in the days of Nabal, but his men are seeing the 'old David' here now, the one that leaned upon Yahweh for strength and for help; to see a man after God's own heart whose looking for the heart of God in this matter, that's one way of taking that, you know, that expression 'a man after God's own heart', he's after the heart of God to make it his own. He's after that now! so he inquires of Yahweh and in verse 8 when he inquired of Yahweh, 'shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them?' and the answer comes through the priest. He answered him, 'Pursue!' you could say the 'yes' or 'no', b&s, Yes, pursue, because thou shalt surely overtake them' (but more than a 'yes' and 'no') the priest with the spirit of God resting upon him could take the 'yes' and he could expand it and say this; 'without fail thou shalt recover all'. How beautifully the Word of God is fulfilled, my dear b&s, you don't need to turn to verse 18 and 19, but that's where you just see the fulfillment of it; and 'yes' they recovered all! every bit.

And what's Saul doing, b&s, while all this is going on? Well, going back to chapter 28 now, just to kind of bring the story into some sort of sequence or the record into some sort of a sequence for us. 1 Samuel 28 verses 3 through 5, 'Now Samuel was dead (there's the economy of the Word of scripture again, isn't it?) 'and all Israel had lamented him and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city, and Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land'. Isn't it interesting that those two things are brought together in one verse of scripture? Samuel is dead, Saul had put away all the witches and those that had familiar spirits from the land. 'And Saul looked at the host of the Philistines and his heart trembled within him, greatly trembled within him'. No where to turn, no where to turn! Let me just show you Saul! just go into the Proverbs for a moment, Proverbs chapter 1, think of Saul now, verse 25, 'But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh' (and oh, b&s, how the fear had come to Saul now, looking out over the host of the Philistines up there in the valley of Jezreel, and his heart is trembling within him) 'When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shalt they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of Yahweh. They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices'. And so it is with Saul and

he's going to be filled with his own devices now because he's got no where to turn, b&s, he's forsaken Yahweh and now Yahweh has forsaken him.

He hadn't been successful in disposing of the witches and the wizards from the land; he hadn't done a good job with this; he knew it, the servants knew it, he had lost the kingdom on the words, 'rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft', didn't he? So in verse 7 and 8 of chapter 28, 'Then said Saul unto his servants, seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit that I may go to her and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman who hath a familiar spirit at Endor'. Right away they knew! they could respond to Saul right away and Saul knew that it could be found. Do you see the proximity of things here? here's the area of Gilboa, here's Endor, and don't forget now, the Philistine armies had encamped in Shunem, probably had spread out into the valley of Jezreel as well; it would be quite a job for Saul to get from the area of Gibeah to Endor (maybe at the most 10 miles) but to make that trip, b&s, would be a bit of a challenge but he's willing to take it! Saul in his perversity is willing to take it, isn't he? In verses 7 and 8 (we've read verse 7) verse 8, 'Saul disguised himself' (you know, I always have to smile when I think of Saul trying to disguise himself, b&s, because Saul was head and shoulders above everybody else in Israel, the tallest man there of all the Israelites; couldn't make himself short so to try and disguise himself in some way, what he did, he just changed his clothes as if this would do anything to fool a woman who had the perception and had as her way of life, the witchcraft, (and we think she would be good at it, it was her craft, wasn't it?) and now Saul goes in before her. 'He disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee'. He came by night alright, didn't he, b&s? You know, he could have come at noon and he would have come by night, because that was the spirit of the man. We're not of the night nor of the darkness as says Paul, but Saul was; the night could have been spent far better for Saul, he could have been preparing the strategy for the war. Better still, b&s, he could have spent the night in prayer, but that's not part of the thinking of Saul at this point in time, is it? Prayer had long since departed from the way of life of Saul, and the sad thing is that what he's doing now for Saul, is a religious thing! he wants to connect with Samuel; and Samuel is dead and Saul is a brother who thinks he can talk with a dead man. All this is an abomination unto the LORD, the king should have known this! How do we explain, b&s, what happened there at Endor? how do we explain it? I'm sure that if we all had a little piece of paper and we wrote down what we think this is all about, and gathered it all together we'd see some different thoughts on this, and I can only give you my thoughts and you'll tell me yours, I'm sure. But we'll just think about this a bit, think about the idea of a familiar spirit, alright? You have two English words that are actually born out of one Hebrew word, one very little Hebrew word, it's the Hebrew word 'ob' sometimes it's spelt 'owb' and you see it this way (176+178) in some of the Lexicons and so forth. But it's a word that means 'to mumble, to prattle' the word 'ventriloquist' finds its way into the definition. Also interestingly enough, part of the definition says it's as a 'water-skin', a water-skin from it's hollow sound, you have the idea somehow of the words just kind of bubbling up through a water-skin, and when they break forth into sound, it's distorted

and it's eerie and it's hollow. You can see the work of the woman, you can see how she would speak when she does these things, if ventriloquism worked its way into her scheme of things and the way she did it. But it goes on in the definition and it says, 'hence a necromancer' (a necromancer is someone who talks to the dead, and the Septuagint when it opens up this, it will bring up again the word 'ventriloquist'. Now from what I can find out about this practice at that time period, the original practice (and some of the archaeologists have found things like this and I'll explain this to you) which they say relate to this type of thing; but the original practice had to do with the digging of a ritual hole or a pit that was dug in the ground, so the one taking part in this, you kind of visually have the idea that the spirit would have access to the practitioner of this particular craft and would come from the ground.

Now there's an interesting verse in Isaiah that just kind of goes along with this idea, but just look at Isaiah chapter 29; it's a prophecy against Jerusalem called Ariel here, the lion of El, but in Isaiah 29 we read this, this prophecy against Jerusalem and the things that are going to happen to it and how it's going to be brought low, in verse 4 'thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as one, one that hath a familiar spirit' (there's that Hebrew word 'ob') 'out of the ground and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust'. There's a little picture here that kind of tells us that the one who supposedly had the familiar spirit operated and it's as though this voice is coming out of the pit or out of the ground where this hollow, gurgling, unnatural eerie sound was coming from; that would make quite a connection to the mind.

This woman had a craft, she was clever, she plays her part well. In verse 9 the woman said to him, 'Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, (do you think she knows it's Saul at this point, b&s? I'm inclined to think that she knows full well that it's Saul) 'how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?' Very clever, isn't she? The words of Saul in response to this are an abomination; if it's ever the case of taking God's name in vain this is it, and I think by the way, taking God's name in vain is a lot greater than the usage of the name in the verbalizing of it, there's a lot more to it than that, b&s, but that's not for now. But look at verse 10, 'Saul sware to her by Yahweh' (she's someone that should have been dead by the word of Yahweh, but instead Saul sware to her by Yahweh) 'saying, As Yahweh liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing'. Imagine that, b&s, is that blasphemous? is that an abomination? is that taking God's name in vain? That's how far gone Saul is, that's how perverse he is at this point in time; I believe, b&s, as we read this record that there is more to this than something that takes place between Saul and the witch of Endor and the two men that went along with him. This is a seance like no other, like no other that the woman had ever been involved in, because I think things are taken out of her control, I see it this way, that the whole scene is taken from her, in a sense, out of her control all together.

The words to the king of Israel is the word of Yahweh through Samuel; now whether you

feel that this was the raising of Samuel from the dead for this purpose or whether it was a vision, or whether it was just a voice, it is the voice of Samuel. I have to tell you, I take a kind of simple approach to these things, it's just my way, when I have something that's a bit troubling like this can be, I think my approach is simple in that I say, 'what does the bible say?' Alright! this is what the bible says, b&s, verse 15, 'And Samuel said to Saul', verse 16 'then said Samuel', verse 20 'Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel'. Now that's what the bible says, the conversation was real; was Samuel there? b&s, do you think Samuel was there? I see his presence there as real as the presence of Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus, talking there with Jesus about His decease that would be accomplished at Jerusalem; real enough that Peter, James and John would look at this scene and speak to the Master and say we should build booths here, 3 booths, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah, and Jesus would in turn say to them, 'tell no man the vision'. But they'd seen it, b&s, and the word 'vision' if you look at the word 'vision' in the New Testament context of the transfiguration, you'll see that it has to do with something that is gazed at (3705) something that's seen, and He tells them and two of the records say 'don't speak about what you've seen'. So they saw it, now granted it was night, it was night and it must have been very dark in the place where the necromancer did her thing, doubtful that much could be seen, b&s, but the voice was Samuel's. And we need to remember this woman is a fraud; everything she did was fraudulent. Her ventriloquism was part of her fraudulent witchcraft and I believe she found herself in a situation where it was out of her control; the scene was taken out of her hands and in a sense she became a kind of an observer if even that, because it seems to me that she withdrew from the scene, at least from the closeness of it and would, as the whole thing played its course, would get back into it again at the end.

Verse 21, you notice this! 'That the woman came to Saul, she came to Saul and saw that he was sore troubled', now she's the orchestrator of this entire event and she would be with him all the time. She would know how troubled he was all the time, because she was manipulating that, but it's as if she doesn't know and she had to return and see the state that Saul was in; I think she just withdrew from the scene just a bit and then would return to it. Also there is that verse in 1 Samuel chapter 15 that kind of brings us to this point in time, with Saul before the witch of Endor and with Samuel there (and you don't have to turn to this either, I'll just remind you of this, you know, this is when the kingdom was taken from him, we're told there in 1 Samuel 15 that 'Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death'; this is the day of his death, b&s) and Samuel was there and the conversation is taking place and it's a dialogue. Samuel speaks to Saul, Saul replies to Samuel, Samuel speaks to Saul again; look at verse 15, and Saul is going to open out to Samuel that he's spiritually bankrupt, that's where Saul is! Verse 15, 'Samuel said to Saul, why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. And Samuel said, Wherefore, then doth thou ask of me, seeing that Yahweh is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?' Samuel has no part with Saul.

The conversation goes on, b&s, through this (we're not going to read the whole conversation of Samuel here) Verse 19 where he says, 'Moreover Yahweh will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: Yahweh also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines'. The conversation is over! there's no more talking, Saul's in shock and stunned about this whole thing. Verse 20, 'Saul fell straightway all along on the earth' (you see the margin, he made haste and fell with the fullness of his stature) it's as though when he first sees Samuel, you remember, he bows down before Samuel on the ground, and I picture him, b&s, on his knees bowing with his head between his hands and then when the conversation begins, it's as though he sits back on his haunches and the conversation takes place. But now, after these final words of Samuel, he's so shocked that he lurches forward and crashes to the ground, the full stature of his body is laid out there upon the dirt of this necromancer's house. The king of Israel, prostrate and powerless!

In verse 21, 'The woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled' and even in this, even in this he yields to her voice, b&s, and takes her lead and does the things that she suggests. He's come to the point of no return has Saul; we can get there, b&s, we can get there this side of the judgment seat sometimes, but when we stand before the Master, we are at that point, it's as though time stands still for us and what we are is what we are, and we cannot change it; and Jesus Himself says, 'he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that be holy, let him be holy still'. The last words of the Lord Jesus in Revelation 22, isn't it? Saul and David! There are a lot of voices crying out to us all the time, b&s, sometimes those voices are the voices of the dead; and we can follow them, but if we do, b&s, we become modern day Sauls. We will be sore distressed, and the words that Samuel said to Saul will be words that will be suitable to us, 'tomorrow thou shalt be with me'. He didn't mean in the kingdom of God, he meant dead in the ground! There's only one voice for us, only one; it doesn't cry out to us from the depths of the earth, b&s, but it cries out to us from the vault of heaven itself, and it says this, this is My beloved Son, hear Him!