

Did the Witch of Endor raise Samuel or Satan?

written by Alfred Persson | September 29, 2020



Did the Witch of Endor raise Samuel or Satan in 1 Samuel 28:1-25?

The fascinating story of the medium at Endor... has been the subject of intense debate since the earliest times: "Was the woman actually able to raise up the righteous dead (i.e., Satan having power over the saints) or was her craft one of mere delusion? Was Samuel resuscitated or was this a demon? Did Samuel appear due to the necromancer's craft or did God intervene and raise Samuel himself?" (Lewis, Cults of the Dead, p. 115 n. 39). -Youngblood, R. F. (1992). 1, 2 Samuel. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel (Vol. 3, p. 779). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Why this should cause intense debate is a mystery to me. Although the narrator never hints Samuel's appearance was a deception (1 Sam. 28:12), he gives two incontrovertible reasons why it was not Samuel.

Reason #1) Human dead are not called Elohim.

And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what seest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god (0430 אֱלֹהִים 'elohiym) coming up out of the earth. (1 Sam. 28:13 ASV)

The subject is 'ēlōhîm...the subject's verb is plural, a situation that regularly occurs in the Masoretic Text when a pagan god is the referent.-Bergen, R. D. (1996). 1, 2 Samuel (Vol. 7, pp. 267-268). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

The Witch was accustomed to spirits, sometimes disguised as the departed, but this being was an Elohim, to her "a god".

"I saw a celestial being come up from the earth." Elohim does not signify gods here, nor yet God; still less an angel or a ghost, or even a person of superior rank, but a celestial (super-terrestrial), heavenly, or spiritual being.-Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). Commentary on the Old Testament (Vol. 2, pp. 542-543). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.

That description fits Satan once the "anointed cherub who walked in the midst of fiery stones" (Ezek. 28:14-15). It follows his appearance is superior to spirits and was the cause of the Witch's alarm. "A god" appeared rather than the usual familiar spirit.

Satan telepathically unmasked Saul's identity: "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!"-(1 Sam. 28:12).

During a "seance" (07080 אָסֵס qacam), diviners "divine by familiar spirit" (1 Sam. 28:8). Spirits telepathically communicate, sending "thoughts" or "impressions" with the requested information (Isa. 8:19; Jer. 29:8; Ezek. 13:9; 22:28; Lk. 8:12; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:1-3).

A survey of the occult, new age and ufo phenomena reveals such communication can be "down loaded" into the brain to produce vividly real "out of body" (or alien abduction) and other visions and dreams. Voices and impressions, physical experiences of hot cold electricity, and emotions such as fear and feelings of a presence, are well documented. Some of these effects have been duplicated in black ops DARPA projects, confirming it would be easy spirit beings telepathically deceive mankind (1 Jn. 5:19; Eph. 2:2)

That is why Paul congratulates those who are inspired by the Mystery of Godliness Sanctified by the Holy Spirit for their obedience to God's Word of Truth the Bible, and not experiences or signs and wonders (2 Thess. 2:13-17; Compare Isa. 8:16-22).

Reason #2) Samuel is not a False Prophet:

"Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow (04279 מחר machar) you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." (1 Sam. 28:19 NKJ)

In Samuel's books "tomorrow" is literally "the next day" (1 Sam. 9:16; 11:9-10; 19:11; 20:5, 12, 18; 2 Sam. 11:12). Where it means "in the future" the context makes that clear (Ex. 13:14; Dt. 6:20). Saul did not die the next day (1 Samuel 29:10; 30:1), he died days later (1 Sam. 31:1-4). Therefore, the prophecy "tomorrow you and your sons will be with me" is false prophecy. Samuel is not a false prophet, therefore it was not Samuel.

Bonus Reason #3

The prophet Samuel would not cooperate with a witch, it is antithetical to his being a prophet of YHWH.

22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (1 Sam. 15:22-23 KJV)

Bonus Reason #4

If it were Samuel, his soul would have been "gathered to his people" (Gen. 25:8; Lk. 16:22). But rebellious Saul's soul would go to the tormenting region of Sheol/Hades upon death (Lk. 16:22-23). As a great gulf would separate them, Saul and sons would not be together with Samuel in the afterlife.

END NOTES

God forbade communication with the dead because it is impossible for the living to speak to them. Familiar spirits are spirits who know the living, and can easily disguise themselves as the departed. As all contact with the spirit realm is contact with Satan and his demons (Lev. 20:2-7), those who practice spiritism are in danger of Gehenna Fire (Lev. 20:6; Ezek. 13:9; Rev. 22:15).

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