

## 17.19 Saul Visits the Witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28:3–25; Deuteronomy 18:10–14; Exodus 22:18)

[This is a difficult lesson to teach. In fact, it is recommended *not* to teach it to young children.]

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *medium*: someone, usually a woman, who conjured up a dead person
- *necromancer*: wizard or witch
- *to fast*: to go without food for a time

### Scripture: (ESV)

1 Samuel 28:3 Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the necromancers out of the land. 4 The Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem. And Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. 7 Then Saul said to his servants, “Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.” And his servants said to him, “Behold, there is a medium at En-dor.”

8 So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, “Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you.” 9 The woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the necromancers from the land. Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death?” 10 But Saul swore to her by the Lord, “As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.” 11 Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” He said, “Bring up Samuel for me.” 12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul.” 13 The king said to her, “Do not be afraid. What do you see?” And the woman said to Saul, “I see a god coming up out of the earth.” 14 He said to her, “What is his appearance?” And she said, “An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe.” And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.

15 Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Saul answered, “I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do.” 16 And Samuel said, “Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy? 17 The Lord has done to you as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day. 19 Moreover, the Lord will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. The Lord will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.”

20 Then Saul fell at once full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night. 21 And the woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him, “Behold, your servant has obeyed you. I have taken my life in my hand and have listened to what you have said to me. 22 Now therefore, you also obey your servant.

Let me set a morsel of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way.” 23 He refused and said, “I will not eat.” But his servants, together with the woman, urged him, and he listened to their words. So he arose from the earth and sat on the bed. 24 Now the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly killed it, and she took flour and kneaded it and baked unleavened bread of it, 25 and she put it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

Deuteronomy 18:10 There shall not be found among you anyone . . . practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer 11 or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, 12 for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord. And because of these abominations the Lord your God is driving them out before you. 13 You shall be blameless before the Lord your God, 14 for these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do this.

Exodus 22:18 “You shall not permit a sorceress to live.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Because David was afraid Saul would get him, to what country/king/town did David flee? [Philistia/ Achish/ Gath, Goliath’s town.] Where was Achish going? [To meet with the other Philistine lords in Aphek.] What were they going to do? [War against Israel.] What happened to save David from fighting against his own country, Israel? [The other Philistine lords sent him home.] What did David find when he arrived home? [Ziklag was burned; families and possessions had been taken away.] What did David do when his soldiers threatened to harm him? [Encouraged himself in the Lord his God.] What happened then? [David fought the Amalekites, won the battle, brought back the families and spoil.]

Background: Israel had wanted a king because they didn’t trust God to lead and protect them day by day. God doesn’t speak to our ears, saying, “You must do such and such today.” Instead, He expects us to make decisions based on the principles of His Word. For example, God’s Word states, “Do not yoke up with an unbeliever.” That includes dating, marrying, being in business with, *etc.*, with an unbeliever.

If people don’t even read or know God’s Word, they will want something else to direct them. Some people depend on the study of stars to direct them. This is called astrology, not astronomy (a legitimate study of the heavens). Astrology, on the other hand, is used to determine one’s future. People think they are under a particular heavenly sign. Newspapers print horoscopes so that those people can be led by the stars in their daily activities. But what does God think about directing your life by the stars? Deuteronomy 18:9–15 tells Israel and us, “There had better not be anyone who interprets signs” (paraphrased).

Other people, whom Satan uses, claim to be able to tell the future. These people are called mediums, spiritists, and even witches. What does God think about these people, who may even seem to be very nice but do devilish things? He, again, tells His people to have nothing to do with them. God “detests” anyone who does these things (Leviticus 20:6, 27).

What about Halloween? Based on what we already know, what do you suppose God thinks about dressing up in a witch or ghost costume? He wants us to have nothing to do with those things.

God is God. We must look to Him to guide us. He may not put words in our ears, but Proverbs 3:5 and 6 state, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” We must know God’s Word: we must trust God and have nothing to do with devilish schemes.

### **Story:**

#### ***Desperate Saul***

Did Saul trust God? No. He had long ago failed to obey God in slaying all the Amalekites. God didn’t lead him through Samuel, for Samuel had left Saul alone and was now dead. God had departed from Saul and no longer led him at all.

Saul was in a very difficult place. Across the valley from him and his men at Gilboa [locate], a huge army of Philistines was gathering at Shunem for war. [Shunem's location is near the northern end but west of the Sea of Galilee. The Philistines were north of the Israelites.] When Saul saw that Philistine army, he was terrified. He tried to ask God what to do, but God did not answer, neither by dreams or priests (how could God answer by priests if Saul had slain them all?), nor by prophets (were any prophets taught by Samuel going to help Saul?).

Saul was so desperate that ✓he must have thought, "If God won't answer me, I'll ask the devil." He commanded his men, "Find me a medium so that I may ask of her." Remember, this was someone God detests because they cooperate with Satan.

Saul's men answered, "A medium lives in Endor." This Endor was north past the Philistine army. So Saul disguised himself with common, not kingly clothes, took only two servants with him, and went to the woman who is called "the witch of Endor."

### ***Devilish woman***

"Consult a spirit for me, and bring the man I name up from the dead," said Saul to the woman in Endor.

"Surely you know Saul has gotten rid of all the spiritists and mediums in the land. You must be tricking me so that I die," replied the woman.

Saul swore to her by the Lord, as he often did without meaning it. This time, though, he meant it. "As surely as the Lord lives . . ." (I hate it when people bring God into their sin, don't you?) Saul continued, "You will not be punished for this." Maybe Saul wouldn't punish this evil woman, but Who would? Yes, God.

Then the woman said, "Okay. Who do you want me to bring up for you?"

"Bring up Samuel," Saul replied.

### ***Ghostly Samuel***

Now, what happened next I don't know how to explain. Perhaps an evil spirit (a demon) made himself look like Samuel.<sup>1</sup> But the Bible states that when the woman saw *Samuel*, she recognized Saul and cried to the top of her voice, "Why have you tricked me? You are Saul!"

But Saul answered, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?"

The woman described a spirit looking like an old prophet. Saul "knew it was Samuel" although ✓he apparently could not see him himself. Saul fell down with his face to the ground and began to complain. "I am very upset and worried. The Philistines are fighting against me. God has turned away from me. He doesn't answer me at all. So I have called on you to tell me what to do."

Samuel answered, "Why do you consult me now that the Lord has turned away from you and become your enemy? The Lord is doing what I prophesied He would do: He has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one near you—David. The Lord has done this because you didn't obey Him in destroying the Amalekites. Tomorrow the Lord will hand over both you, your sons, and Israel to the Philistines. ✓Soon, you and your sons will die."<sup>2</sup>

Those horrifying words filled Saul with even greater terror. He fell totally flat on the ground, having no strength, partly for fear and partly because he had not eaten all day or night.

### ***Good meal***

The woman found Saul in this pitiful state and said, "Look, I risked my life to do what you asked. Now please listen to me. Let me get you some food so that you may have strength to go your way."

"No!" said Saul. "I will not eat."

Saul's two servants joined the woman in urging Saul to eat. Finally, he agreed. He got up and sat on a couch

while the woman fixed a big dinner. After they had eaten, Saul and his two servants left, returning to the Israelite camp before morning light.

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<sup>1</sup>Who or what appeared? We probably can't know for sure. John Gill's commentary states the following: "Some have thought that it was the true Samuel, or the soul of Samuel, that appeared; so Josephus, and many other writers; but to this may be objected, that that would not have ascended out of the earth, but come down from heaven; and that it cannot reasonably be supposed that it was in the power of the witch, by the assistance of the devil, to fetch it from heaven; nor be thought that God would send it from thence on such an errand, to give Saul an answer, when he would not answer him by any prophet on earth, nor in any other way; and especially it seems quite incredible that he should send it at the motion of a witch, and through her enchantments, who, according to a law of his, ought not to live; whereas nothing could have given greater countenance to such a wicked profession than this: nor would the true Samuel have admitted such worship and homage to be paid him, as is expressed in this last clause, which angelic spirits have refused, (Revelation 19:10) (Revelation 22:9 Revelation 22:10); though perhaps no more than civil respect is intended: but rather this was a diabolical spectre, or apparition, or the devil, that appeared in the form and shape of Samuel, and mimicked him; and was one of those deceiving spirits Porphyry speaks of, that appear in various shapes and forms, and pretend to be gods or demons, or the souls of the deceased. Some think all this was the cunning and imposture of the woman alone, or that she was assisted with a confederate, who acted the part of Samuel; but this is not probable" (1 Samuel 28:14 - Meaning and Commentary on Bible Verse (biblestudytools.com)).

<sup>2</sup>Strong's Concordance states that the word *tomorrow* (1 Samuel 28:19) can be indefinite in time—*hereafter* rather than *the next day*.

### **Lessons from This Lesson:**

- We see Jesus:

We do not see Jesus in this episode; rather, we see His and our enemy, the devil. Remember, for the believer, "greater is He [Father, Son, Spirit] that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4; *cf.* John 14:23).

- God will do all His holy will—what He says He will do. He will not necessarily do His will at the time we want it.
- [Be prayerful and cautious about mentioning the activities found in this "Lesson from This Lesson." We do not wish to stir up curiosity in our students.] Never deal with séances, Ouija boards, pretend witches, astrology, *etc.*, for these are not of God but the devil.
- Trust the Lord. Repent of sin as soon as you are aware of your sin. Don't excuse your sin or make light of it. Read and study your Bible. Memorize and rest in God's Word.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: dinner plate; silverware; soldier
- Snack: Unleavened bread and cubes of cooked beef
- Discuss another time Saul went without eating—when Jonathan had defeated the Philistines and hadn't heard Saul's command not to eat. Both times, Saul's decision to fast was inadvisable.
- Review questions: (Game: Eat some food. On card stock print the pictures found below of unleavened bread and beef. For each correct answer, students will place a food picture in a pocket chart.)
  1. Whom had Saul put out of the land? [All the mediums and necromancers.]
  2. Why was Saul so afraid? [Because so many Philistines were coming against Israel.]
  3. Trick question: Why didn't Saul ask the Lord what to do? [He did, but God did not answer him.]

4. Who (or whose form) appeared to Saul? [Samuel.]
5. What had the Lord said about Saul's rule in the kingdom? [It was taken from Saul's rule and given to David's.]
6. How would Israel do in the battle against the Philistines, according to Samuel? [Israel would be defeated by Philistia.]
7. What did Samuel say would happen to Saul and his sons? [They would soon die.]

**Memory Verse[s]:** (KJV)

- Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

**Handwork:**

- Make a paper-cup telephone. Instructions are here: [How to Make a Telephone with Paper and Plastic Cups \(globalcallforwarding.com\)](http://globalcallforwarding.com). (The string length does not need to be as long as the instructions specify.) The following videos might be helpful: [How to make a telephone with plastic cups - EP - simplekidscrafts - simplekidscrafts - Bing video](#) (first minute) and [Make Your Own String Phone | One Stop Science Shop - Bing video](#).

To both cups glue or tape the scripture found at the end of this lesson. Glue or tape the word *God* to one cup and the word *Saul* to the other.

A students may speak into one cup while the other student hears with the cup next to his/her ear. Students may be in different rooms as long as the string does not touch something. The teacher may wish to cut the string of his/her personal "telephone" to show how God cut off communication with Saul (idea from [Kidfrugal: King Saul and the Witch of Endor](#)).

**medium**

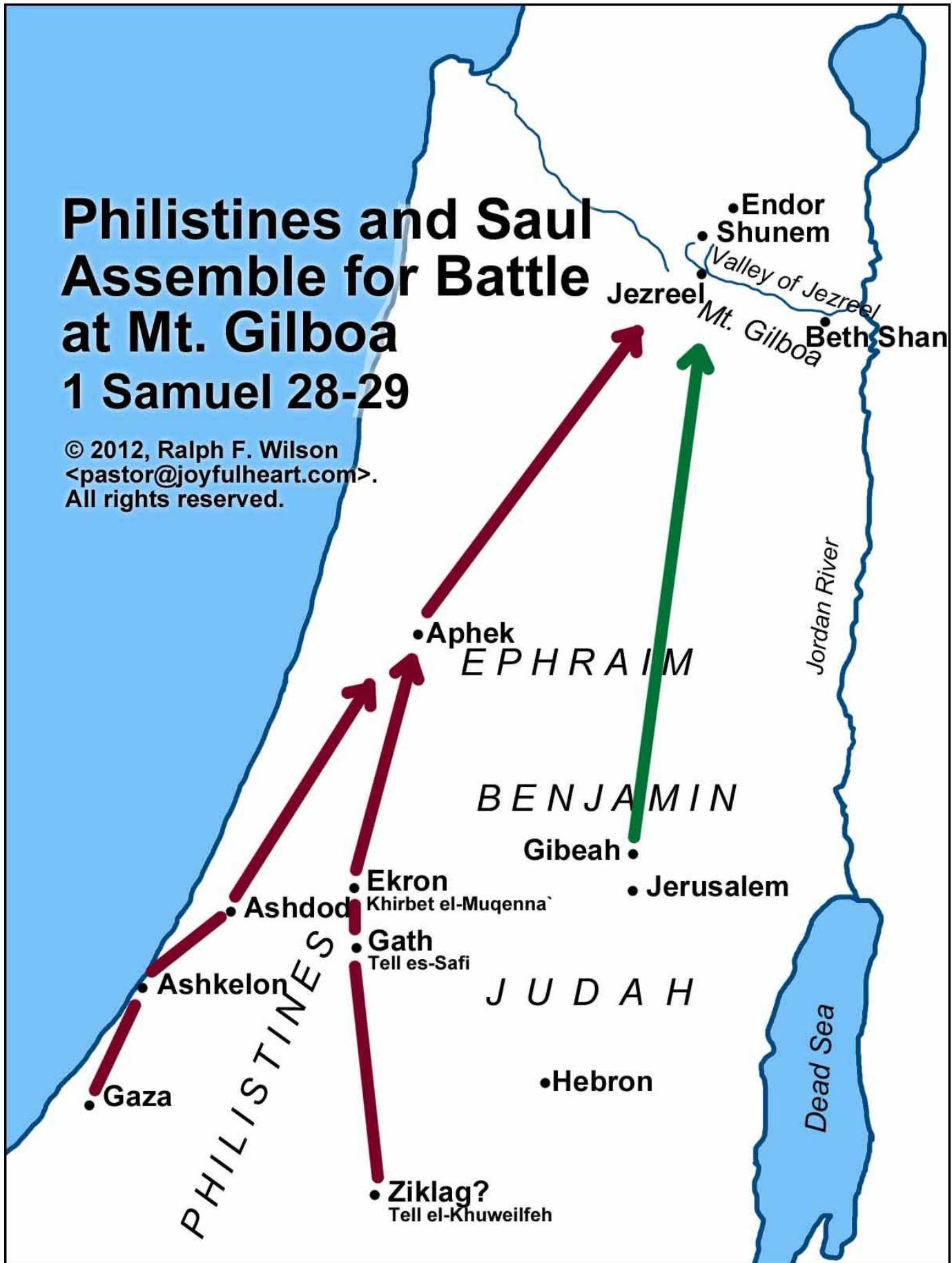
**necromancer**

**to fast**

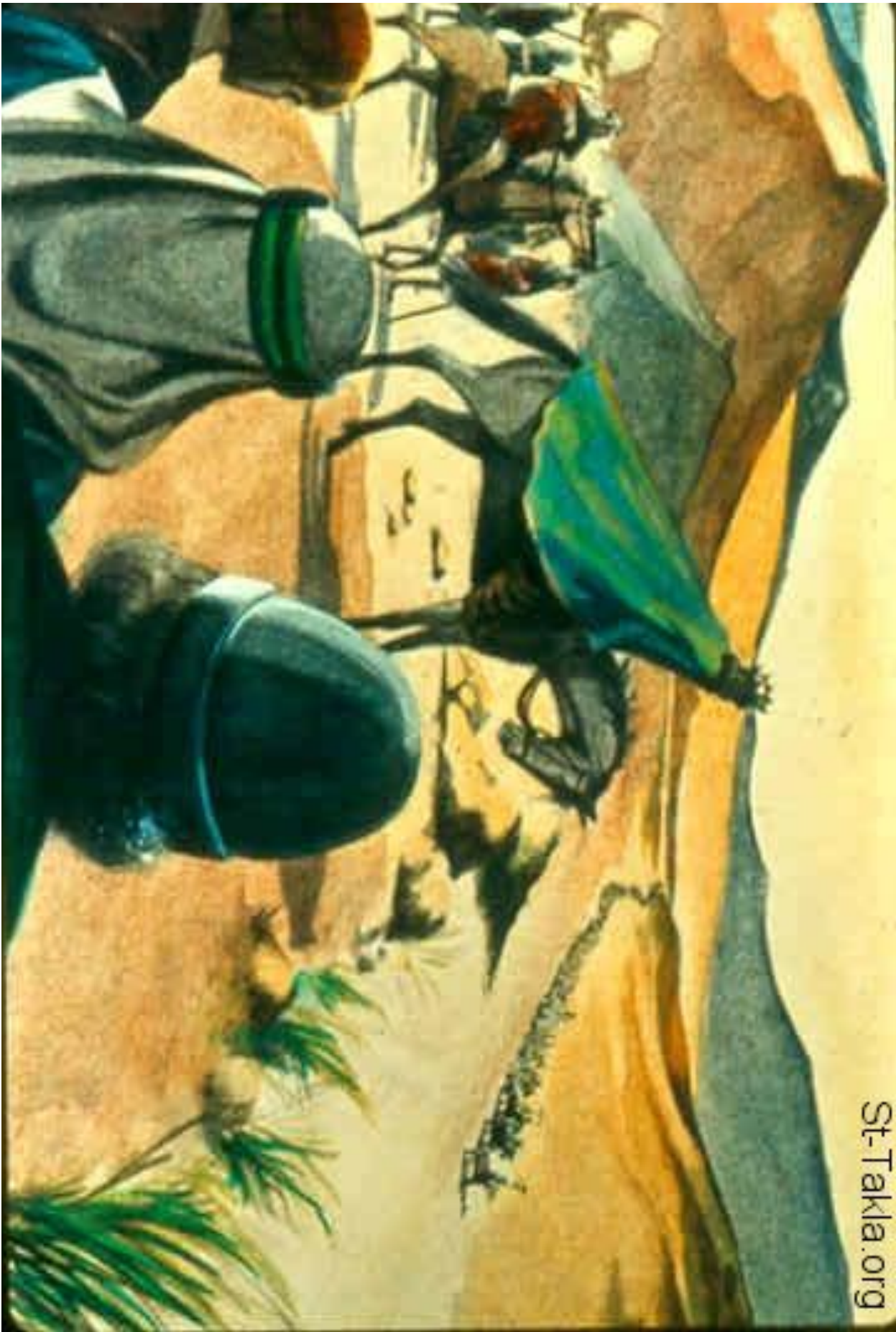
# Philistines and Saul Assemble for Battle at Mt. Gilboa

## 1 Samuel 28-29

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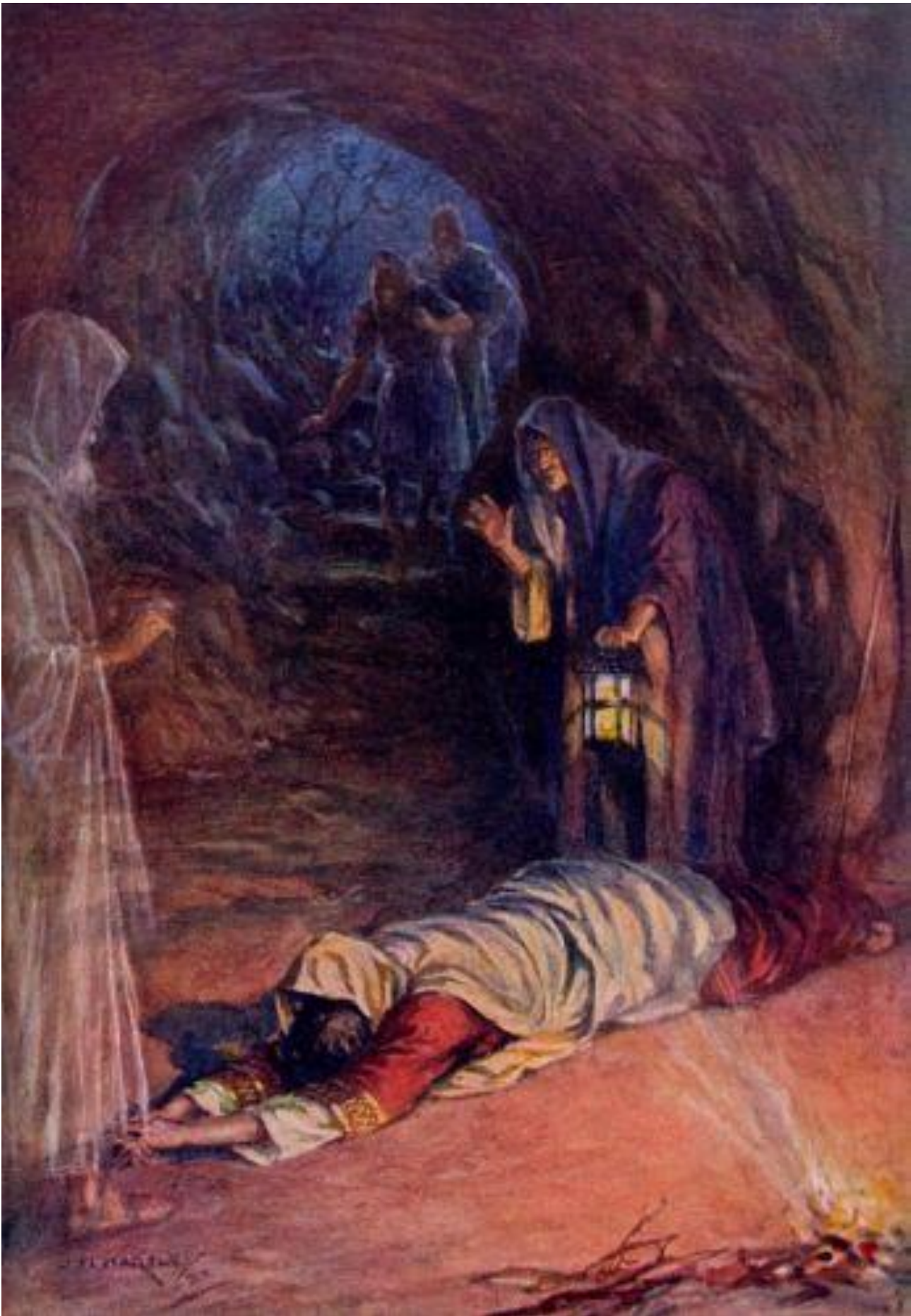




St-Takla.org







Witch of Endor - Image 8 ([christianimagesource.com](http://christianimagesource.com))





Picture sources: [unleavened bread - Bing images](#) and [DSC05597.JPG \(1600x900\) \(bp.blogspot.com\)](#)

<p>“When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets,” (1 Samuel 28:6).</p>	<p>“When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets,” (1 Samuel 28:6).</p>
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**Saul**

**Saul**

**Saul**

**Saul**

**God**

**God**

**God**

**God**