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## Kings and Prophets 1 Samuel 28-31 By Kirk Gambrell

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### Using This Study

#### ❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

#### ❷ EXPLORE His Word

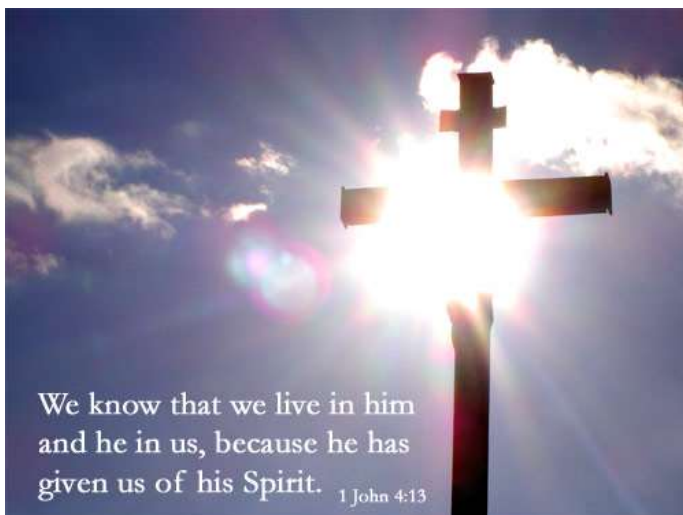
What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

#### ❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



In this last section, we will look at the conclusion of the book of 1 Samuel. This marks the transition from King Saul to King David. In an interesting passage, Saul goes to a medium and tries to communicate with the dead prophet Samuel. This goes strongly against the instruction that the nation of Israel has in the books of the law. After Saul's encounter, God finishes the transition from Saul to David. Saul and his sons that were with him in battle die on the battle field. This begins the process of David becoming king. Today we will look at the actions of Saul and what it tells us about the process of God raising David up to be king.



We know that we live in him  
and he in us, because he has  
given us of his Spirit. 1 John 4:13

## Read 1 Samuel 28-31 (NET)

**28** <sup>1</sup> In those days the Philistines gathered their troops for war in order to fight Israel. Achish said to David, "You should fully understand that you and your men must go with me into the battle." <sup>2</sup> David replied to Achish, "That being the case, you will come to know what your servant can do!" Achish said to David, "Then I will make you my bodyguard from now on."

<sup>3</sup> Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented over him and had buried him in Ramah, his hometown. In the meantime Saul had removed the mediums and magicians from the land. <sup>4</sup> The Philistines assembled; they came and camped at Shunem. Saul mustered all Israel and camped at Gilboa. <sup>5</sup> When Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was absolutely terrified. <sup>6</sup> So Saul inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him—not by dreams nor by Urim nor by the prophets. <sup>7</sup> So Saul instructed his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her." His servants replied to him, "There is a woman who is a medium in Endor."

<sup>8</sup> So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothing and left, accompanied by two of his men. They came to the woman at night and said, "Use your ritual pit to conjure up for me the one I tell you."

<sup>9</sup> But the woman said to him, "Look, you are aware of what Saul has done; he has removed the mediums and magicians from the land! Why are you trapping me so you can put me to death?" <sup>10</sup> But Saul swore an oath to her by the Lord, "As surely as the Lord lives, you will not incur guilt in this matter!"

<sup>11</sup> The woman replied, "Who is it that I should bring up for you?" He said, "Bring up for me Samuel."

<sup>12</sup> When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out loudly. The woman said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!" <sup>13</sup> The king said to her, "Don't be afraid! What have you seen?" The woman replied to Saul, "I have seen one like a god coming up from the ground!" <sup>14</sup> He said to her, "What about his appearance?" She said, "An old man is coming up! He is wrapped in a robe!"

Then Saul realized it was Samuel, and he bowed his face toward the ground and kneeled down. <sup>15</sup> Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul replied, "I am terribly troubled! The Philistines are fighting against me and God has turned away from me. He does not answer me—not by the prophets nor by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what I should do."

<sup>16</sup> Samuel said, "Why are you asking me, now that the Lord has turned away from you and has become your enemy?" <sup>17</sup> The Lord has done exactly as I prophesied! The Lord has torn the kingdom from your hand and has given it to your neighbor David! <sup>18</sup> Since you did not obey the Lord and did not carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites, the Lord has done this thing to you today. <sup>19</sup> The Lord will hand you and Israel over to the Philistines! Tomorrow both you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also hand the army of Israel over to the Philistines!"

<sup>20</sup> Saul quickly fell full length on the ground and was very afraid because of Samuel's words. He was completely drained of energy, not having eaten anything all that day and night. <sup>21</sup> When the woman came to Saul and saw how terrified he was, she said to him, "Your servant has done what you asked. I took my life into my own hands and did what you told me." <sup>22</sup> Now it's your turn to listen to your servant! Let me set before you a bit of bread so that you can eat. When you regain your strength, you can go on your way."

<sup>23</sup> But he refused, saying, "I won't eat!" Both his servants and the woman urged him to eat, so he gave in. He got up from the ground and sat down on the bed. <sup>24</sup> Now the woman had a well-fed calf at her home that she quickly slaughtered. Taking some flour, she kneaded bread and baked it without leaven. <sup>25</sup> She brought it to Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they arose and left that same night.

**29** <sup>1</sup> The Philistines assembled all their troops at Aphek, while Israel camped at the spring that is in Jezreel. <sup>2</sup> When the leaders of the Philistines were passing in review at the head of their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were passing in review in the rear with Achish.

<sup>3</sup> The leaders of the Philistines asked, "What about these Hebrews?" Achish said to the leaders of the Philistines, "Isn't this David, the servant of King Saul of Israel, who has been with me for quite some time? I have found no fault with him from the day of his defection until the present time!"

<sup>4</sup> But the leaders of the Philistines became angry with him and said to him, "Send the man back! Let him return to the place that you assigned him! Don't let him go down with us into the battle, for he might become our adversary in the battle. What better way to please his lord than with the heads of these men?" <sup>5</sup> Isn't this David, of whom they sang as they danced,

‘Saul has struck down his thousands,  
but David his tens of thousands?’”

<sup>6</sup> So Achish summoned David and said to him,  
“As surely as the Lord lives, you are an honest man,  
and I am glad to have you serving with me in the  
army. I have found no fault with you from the day  
that you first came to me until the present time. But  
in the opinion of the leaders, you are not reliable.

<sup>7</sup> So turn and leave in peace. You must not do  
anything that the leaders of the Philistines consider  
improper!”

<sup>8</sup> But David said to Achish, “What have I done?  
What have you found in your servant from the day  
that I first came into your presence until the present  
time, that I shouldn’t go and fight the enemies of my  
lord the king?” <sup>9</sup> Achish replied to David, “I am  
convinced that you are as reliable as the angel of  
God! However, the leaders of the Philistines have  
said, ‘He must not go up with us in the battle.’” <sup>10</sup> So  
get up early in the morning along with the servants  
of your lord who have come with you. When you get  
up early in the morning, as soon as it is light enough  
to see, leave.”

<sup>11</sup> So David and his men got up early in the  
morning to return to the land of the Philistines, but  
the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

**30** <sup>1</sup> On the third day David and his men came  
to Ziklag. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev  
and Ziklag. They attacked Ziklag and burned it.

<sup>2</sup> They took captive the women who were in it, from  
the youngest to the oldest, but they did not kill  
anyone. They simply carried them off and went on  
their way.

<sup>3</sup> When David and his men came to the city,  
they found it burned. Their wives, sons, and  
daughters had been taken captive. <sup>4</sup> Then David  
and the men who were with him wept loudly until  
they could weep no more. <sup>5</sup> David’s two wives had  
been taken captive—Ahinoam the Jezreelite and  
Abigail the Carmelite, Nabal’s widow. <sup>6</sup> David was  
very upset, for the men were thinking of stoning  
him; each man grieved bitterly over his sons and  
daughters. But David drew strength from the Lord  
his God.

<sup>7</sup> Then David said to the priest Abiathar son of  
Ahimelech, “Bring me the ephod.” So Abiathar  
brought the ephod to David. <sup>8</sup> David inquired of the  
Lord, saying, “Should I pursue this raiding band?  
Will I overtake them?” He said to him, “Pursue, for  
you will certainly overtake them and carry out a  
rescue!”

<sup>9</sup> So David went, accompanied by his six  
hundred men. When he came to the Wadi Besor,  
those who were in the rear stayed there. <sup>10</sup> David

and four hundred men continued the pursuit, but  
two hundred men who were too exhausted to cross  
the Wadi Besor stayed there.

<sup>11</sup> Then they found an Egyptian in the field and  
brought him to David. They gave him bread to eat  
and water to drink. <sup>12</sup> They gave him a slice of  
pressed figs and two bunches of raisins to eat. This  
greatly refreshed him, for he had not eaten food or  
drunk water for three days and three nights. <sup>13</sup> David  
said to him, “To whom do you belong, and where  
are you from?” The young man said, “I am an  
Egyptian, the servant of an Amalekite man. My  
master abandoned me when I was ill for three days.”  
<sup>14</sup> We conducted a raid on the Negev of the  
Kerethites, on the area of Judah, and on the Negev  
of Caleb. We burned Ziklag.” <sup>15</sup> David said to him,  
“Can you take us down to this raiding party?” He  
said, “Swear to me by God that you will not kill me  
or hand me over to my master, and I will take you  
down to this raiding party.”

<sup>16</sup> So he took David down, and they found them  
spread out over the land. They were eating and  
drinking and enjoying themselves because of all the  
loot they had taken from the land of the Philistines  
and from the land of Judah. <sup>17</sup> But David struck  
them down from twilight until the following evening.  
None of them escaped, with the exception of four  
hundred young men who got away on camels.

<sup>18</sup> David retrieved everything the Amalekites had  
taken; he also rescued his two wives. <sup>19</sup> There was  
nothing missing, whether small or great. He  
retrieved sons and daughters, the plunder, and  
everything else they had taken. David brought  
everything back. <sup>20</sup> David took all the flocks and  
herds and drove them in front of the rest of the  
animals. People were saying, “This is David’s  
plunder!”

<sup>21</sup> Then David approached the two hundred men  
who had been too exhausted to go with him, those  
whom they had left at the Wadi Besor. They went  
out to meet David and the people who were with  
him. When David approached the people, he asked  
how they were doing. <sup>22</sup> But all the evil and  
worthless men among those who had gone with  
David said, “Since they didn’t go with us, we won’t  
give them any of the loot we retrieved! They may  
take only their wives and children. Let them lead  
them away and be gone!”

<sup>23</sup> But David said, “No! You shouldn’t do this, my  
brothers. Look at what the Lord has given us! He  
has protected us and has delivered into our hands  
the raiding party that came against us. <sup>24</sup> Who will  
listen to you in this matter? The portion of the one  
who went down into the battle will be the same as

the portion of the one who remained with the equipment! Let their portions be the same!”

<sup>25</sup> From that time onward it was a binding ordinance for Israel, right up to the present time.

<sup>26</sup> When David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah who were his friends, saying, “Here’s a gift for you from the looting of the Lord’s enemies!” <sup>27</sup> The gift was for those in the following locations: for those in Bethel, Ramoth Negev, and Jattir; <sup>28</sup> for those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa, <sup>29</sup> and Racal; for those in the cities of the Jerahmeelites and Kenites; <sup>30</sup> for those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach, <sup>31</sup> and Hebron; and for those in whatever other places David and his men had traveled.

**31** <sup>1</sup> Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel. The men of Israel fled from the Philistines and many of them fell dead on Mount Gilboa. <sup>2</sup> The Philistines stayed right on the heels of Saul and his sons. They struck down Saul’s sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua. <sup>3</sup> Saul himself was in the thick of the battle; the archers spotted him and wounded him severely.

<sup>4</sup> Saul said to his armor bearer, “Draw your sword and stab me with it! Otherwise these uncircumcised people will come, stab me, and torture me.” But his armor bearer refused to do it,

because he was very afraid. So Saul took his sword and fell on it. <sup>5</sup> When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own sword and died with him. <sup>6</sup> So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men died together that day.

<sup>7</sup> When the men of Israel who were in the valley and across the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled. The Philistines came and occupied them.

<sup>8</sup> The next day, when the Philistines came to strip loot from the corpses, they discovered Saul and his three sons lying dead on Mount Gilboa.

<sup>9</sup> They cut off Saul’s head and stripped him of his armor. They sent messengers to announce the news in the temple of their idols and among their people throughout the surrounding land of the Philistines. <sup>10</sup> They placed Saul’s armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and hung his corpse on the city wall of Beth Shan.

<sup>11</sup> When the residents of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, <sup>12</sup> all their warriors set out and traveled throughout the night. They took Saul’s corpse and the corpses of his sons from the city wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them. <sup>13</sup> They took the bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh; then they fasted for seven days.

## **EXAMINE His Word (Observation)** (For personal preparation)

**What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the foregoing passages.**

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.
2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.

4. Is there anything repeated?

5. What is emphasized?

6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?

7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

**2 EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation)** (For Community Group discussion)  
**What does God MEAN?**

8. In chapter 28, why is Saul seeking guidance from the Lord?

9. Why do you think God does not answer Saul?

10. Do you believe it was a bad idea for Saul to go to the medium at Endor and seek Samuel?  
Why?

11. Do you think that it was really Samuel who talked to Saul?

12. Why was David sent away from the Philistines on the verge of battle?

**③ EMBRACE His Word (Application)** (For Community Group discussion)

**Why does this MATTER to me?**

13. Today there are many people that claim to be psychic and predict the future, even communicating with the dead. Are any of these things real? How should we deal with them?

14. Are there other spirit beings such as angels and demons that could influence a situation like Saul with the medium at Endor? If so, do those same spirit beings impact today's world?

## **Summarize your thoughts on the passage**

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

## **SERMON NOTES**