

CONCERNING THE WAY

October 21, 2008

LESSON 35: ISRAEL: 1 SAMUEL



Chapter 25

In chapter 25 we are going to meet one of the most outstanding women in all of God's Word, Abigail. This woman you very rarely hear anything of, yet she was one of David's first wives; she was a woman that demonstrated a tremendous amount of wisdom. The story of Abigail is about a woman who met David during the time of the persecution phase of his life, and she was able to minister to him in a real fantastic way. She was in a situation where, had this woman not been there, with the proper wisdom, maturity, and attitude at the right moment, David probably would have been ruined as a king. So once again we find this is a deliverance by God

1 Samuel 25:1 Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned him. They buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David left and went down to the desert of Paran.

So one of the greatest prophets of God goes to his rest. What a life of service to the Lord! It's not much of an epitaph, but the fact that the whole country mourned him is a testimony to his faithfulness.

Saul has now lost every link with the line of the prophets. Saul has become an autonomous king; he is divorced from all revelation; he has no, as it were, hot line to God. And this is what Saul really wanted, to be free from the priesthood that he never paid attention to; to be free of the prophets that he never listened to.

The set up for this story is the south end of the Promised Land. There's a big desert down there in Paran, located just to the southwest of the Dead Sea. The significance of this location is that there are bands of raiding Arabs all through this area; they will wait, just as the Philistines wait for the farmers to grow their crops and harvest them, then the Philistines would come in and steal the harvest, so the Arabs, they weren't particularly gung ho about harvesting, but they would wait until the sheep ranchers had their flocks deployed in the field and then they would go get them. In other words, when they wanted some veal cutlet for the evening they went and stole some. So the average businessman who ran a sheep ranch down in this area had tremendous losses. And unless he had military protection he would not make any profit in his business.

Remember that the king's job is to save the nation. He and his army are too busy chasing David around, and aren't doing the jobs the army is supposed to be doing, like providing the protection for the sheep ranchers in the southern area.

(1Sa 25:2) There was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. This man was very wealthy; he owned three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. At that time he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

Verse 2 gives us background on one of the stars of the story, one of the characters and he is a character. This man was wealthy, so we know that Abigail, as his wife, is a wealthy woman. She is used to living in wealthy surroundings.

(1Sa 25:3) The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. She was both wise and beautiful, but the man was harsh and his deeds were evil. He was a Calebite.

The word "Nabal," comes from a verb, and it means to be calloused in the conscience. It doesn't mean to be stupid, a person can be crafty, but he probably got nicknamed this because of the way he acted; like he had no conscience.

But his wife was altogether different; she had a spiritual maturity combined with beauty; beauty on the inside and beauty on the outside, it's a rare combination. You often see women that are beautiful on the outside and they're absolutely stupid when it comes to spiritual things. Abigail got burned in her life, and she married the wrong man. We don't know how it happened, but she got saddled with this loser that she had married. Nabal probably saw her

and gave her a big pitch, Hon, I've got all this ranch land and so forth, and she fell for the line because this would be financial security, and many women go for this.

Notice the order of the text; God's Word recognizes her beauty on the inside first and then incidentally she was beautiful, too. The great thing about this story is that Abigail actually changes the course of history by influencing very strong men and she does it without losing her femininity. She doesn't nag, she doesn't turn into a man and start dictating to these guys what they should do. She is smooth and she attains her goal. So this is a testimony to a model woman in God's Word, a woman who had fantastic strength and character. It also shows us something else about David. He would even listen to a woman telling him God's will, which was unheard of in that day.

1 Samuel 25:4-8 *When David heard in the desert that Nabal was shearing his sheep, (5) he sent ten servants, saying to them, "Go up to Carmel to see Nabal and give him greetings in my name. (6) Then you will say to my brother, "Peace to you and your house! Peace to all that is yours! (7) Now I hear that they are shearing sheep for you. When your shepherds were with us, we neither insulted them nor harmed them the whole time they were in Carmel. (8) Ask your own servants; they can tell you! May my servants find favor in your sight, for we have come at the time of a holiday. Please provide us — your servants and your son David — with whatever you can spare."*

Apparently when David and his men were down in this area, they protected Nabal's flocks from Arab raids. David is telling these men he's sending to ask Nabal for some payment in return for that. It's not that he's sending ten men to threaten Nabal, that's not the point at all. At the end of verse 5, notice the phrase, "give him greetings in my name," this is just a little footnote.

You know, when we pray we say "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Do you know what we mean when we say we pray in Christ's name? Here's what it means. The messengers go and ask for payment in David's name. Another contemporary way of expressing the thought would be that they were on David's business, that they had come to Nabal, not because of something personal to them but on the business of David. So when the believer comes to God the Father in the Trinity, and he says Father, give me such and such, in the name of Your Son, what we are asking the Father is that we are in the business of your Son, we are identifying ourselves with the Son's business.

This is why you do not pray to Christ, you pray always to the Father, not to Jesus. If you come to the Father then it's on Jesus' business; but if you come just to Jesus, then in whose business do you come? Your own, and that's not right; you come to the Father in Jesus name. Jesus is the one who has given us access to the Father.

Notice that David is going to the extreme to be gracious to this man who owes him money. David's got to feed his soldiers, and this is the way they earned their money. David's army had no federal subsidy program, they earned their way by usefulness to the civilian population.

1 Samuel 25:9-12 *So David's servants went and spoke all these words to Nabal in David's name. Then they paused. (10) But Nabal responded to David's servants, "Who is David, and who is this son of Jesse? This is a time when many servants are breaking away from their masters! (11) Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers and give them to these men? I don't even know where they came from!" (12) So David's servants went on their way. When they had returned, they came and told David all these things.*

You can see that Nabal is being rude. These men made their claim and they sat and waited. And he doesn't know David. What a convenient way to get out of a debt. That's an insult, he doesn't know David. Who was the national hero a few years ago; who was the one they had parades for in every city? What do you mean you don't know David; the Philistines know David, the Arabs know David, everyone knows David.

1 Samuel 25:12-13 *So David's servants went on their way. When they had returned, they came and told David all these things. (13) Then David instructed his men, "Each of you strap on your sword!" So each one strapped on his sword, and David also strapped on his sword. About four hundred men followed David up, while two hundred stayed behind with the equipment.*

In verse 13, David has had it and blows his stack. And so without consulting the Lord, he's going to take action. And you needn't read any further to see what is on David's mind - Nabal is just about to learn who the son of Jesse is. "David also strapped on his sword." means that David had personal vengeance on his mind.

But now we have the first piece of evidence that God is going to do a wonderful work, because if David does what he wants to do he's going to be guilty of bloodshed. And this was an insult that did not warrant capital punishment. David is out of line, he's out of fellowship, and the testimony to the office of messiah would be ruined. David must be stopped, for his sake, for the Lord's sake. If David gets to his throne by one work of his own, then God's grace is defamed. God must protect His nature and His character and His testimony of grace, He will get David to the throne.

1 Samuel 25:14-20 *But one of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail, "David sent messengers from the desert to greet our lord, but he screamed at them. (15) These men were very good to us. They did not insult us, nor did we sustain any loss during the entire time we were together in the field. (16) Both night and day they were a protective wall for us the entire time we were with them, while we were tending our flocks. (17) Now be aware of this, and see what you can do. For disaster has been planned for our lord and his entire household. He is such a wicked person that no one tells him anything!" (18) So Abigail quickly took two hundred loaves of bread, two containers of wine, five prepared sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred bunches of raisins, and two hundred lumps of pressed figs. She loaded them on donkeys (19) and said to her servants, "Go on ahead of me. I will come after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. (20) Riding on her donkey, she went down under cover of the mountain. David and his men were coming down to meet her, and she encountered them.*

Now this puts Abigail in a very bad position. I'm sure she's always tried to be submissive to her husband, but here, because she rejects submission to her husband, she saves the day. Abigail is submissive to the Word of God, that's her standard, and as her husband was in the will of God in a general sense, in the sense of operating reasonably well as a husband she obeyed him. But when it comes to a point where the Word of God itself is at stake, she is authorized not to submit to her husband at this point. So Abigail begins to take action independently of her husband.

God, being sovereign, knows He's got to stop David. Samuel is dead, and no other prophets seem to be around. Apparently there are no priests around, either, so God's going to use Abigail to communicate to David. She meets David at just the point of the crossroads. This is not a chance meeting; fate doesn't rule the universe nor does chance. God's sovereign decrees do. So God works it out so that Abigail and David meet at exactly the right time.

1 Samuel 25:21-22 *Now David had been thinking, "In vain I guarded everything that belonged to this man in the desert. I didn't take anything from him. But he has repaid my good with evil. (22) God will severely punish David, if I leave alive until morning even one male from all those who belong to him!"*

This is a parenthesis to help us understand the nature of the crisis. These two verses are to show you the depth of David's vengeance. He's ready to kill everyone.

1 Samuel 25:23-24 *When Abigail saw David, she got down quickly from the donkey, threw herself down before David, and bowed to the ground. (24) Falling at his feet, she said, "My lord, I accept all the guilt! But please let your female servant speak with my lord! Please listen to the words of your servant!"*

What does this tell you about the nature of Abigail? Abigail is a fantastic woman, she is wealthy but she hasn't let her wealth go to head. She operates with humility, she approaches David as just a normal woman. She doesn't come expecting David to kiss her ring or something. Why do you suppose she is taking the blame for this? She's using her head, and she's very brave. She's saying let me take my husband's punishment. She stands in front of him, daring him to plunge the sword in to her, a very clever thing because David is not going to kill such a nice looking woman. She knows that he isn't going to hit her, and she uses that to slowly make David see that he just might be wrong.

She's using her femininity, too, not trying to act like a man. This woman is a brilliant believer. She's gotten his attention so he'll listen to her.

That's the first rule of dealing with men that smart ladies understand. You don't walk up to a guy and start blabbing in his ear and expect that he's going to listen to you, and women make that mistake all the time. They think automatically because the mouth is going that the ear is open. That's not true; just because your mouth is going in high gear doesn't mean a thing; his ear can be closed, all the time. So Abigail gets the attention of David first, very dramatically, without losing her femininity, and now she says David, I have something to tell you, please listen to me. All of it polite, all of it courteous.

1 Samuel 25:25-26 *My lord should not pay attention to this wicked man Nabal. He simply lives up to his name! His name means 'fool,' and he is indeed foolish! But I, your servant, did not see the servants my lord sent. (26) "Now, my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and as surely as you live, it is the LORD who has kept you from shedding blood and taking matters into your own hands. Now may your enemies and those who seek to harm my lord be like Nabal.*

Here's she's saying I know, David, I'm married to an idiot. This is not maligning her husband at this point. She's just stating a fact, the guy is a flat idiot. And the whole neighborhood knows it because they call him Nabal. Everybody that works with him knows he's an idiot, not in the sense that he's stupid, but in the sense that he's got no conscience. This guy would knife you in the back any time he got a chance. Abigail was a scheming woman for the Lord; she used every ounce of Bible doctrine she had at her disposal to head this thing off, because she too was going to suffer if David continued on his course of action.

1 Samuel 25:27-31 *Now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the servants who follow my lord. (28) Please forgive the sin of your servant, for the LORD will certainly establish the house of my lord, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD. May no evil be found in you all your days! (29) When someone sets out to chase you and to take your life, the life of my lord will be wrapped securely in the bag of the living by the LORD your God. But he will sling away the lives of your enemies from the sling's pocket! (30) The LORD will do for my lord everything that he promised you, and he will make you a leader over Israel. (31) Your conscience will not be overwhelmed with guilt for having poured out innocent blood and for having taken matters into your own hands. When the LORD has granted my lord success, please remember your servant."*

David is going to do more than remember the handmaid, he can't get this woman out of his mind; she's amazing. Notice the logic of Abigail's argument. She has a sense of God's sovereign plan for the nation. She is prophesying here of the Davidic Covenant; not only is David going to be king, but David's dynasty is going to be established. And this is the first time this is mentioned. In 1 Samuel, the great prophecy of Messiah came from the lips of Hannah, and the great prophecy of the Davidic Covenant comes out of the lips of Abigail. God uses godly women.

What made Abigail a great woman? She knew the Word, and she knew how to apply it. She's saying David, don't blow your calling. She's encouraging this man. He isn't even her husband but she has the maturity to see that as a woman her role is to encourage him in the way in which God is leading that man. This is the mark of a great woman; she functions the way Eve was made to function. And oh is David going to recognize this. He recognizes Abigail as a woman who understands him, who understands what God is going to do in his life.

1 Samuel 25:32-35 *Then David said to Abigail, "Praised be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me! (33) Praised be your good judgment! May you yourself be rewarded for having prevented me this day from shedding blood and taking matters into my own hands! (34) Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives — he who has prevented me from harming you — if you had not come so quickly to meet me, by morning's light not even one male belonging to Nabal would have remained alive!" (35) Then David took from her hand what she had brought to him. He said to her, "Go back to your home in peace. Be assured that I have listened to you and responded favorably."*

This shows that David now recognizes who is in back of Abigail. This woman knows how to deal with a man, and what she does so impresses David because he recognizes in back of that woman is the Lord. She is submissive to the Lord in such a way that when she acts toward her man, her man responds to her without losing his masculinity either. He does it because he responding to the Lord in back of the woman. He saw the Lord in her, that's why he responded. Now ladies, if a guy is going to hate you because you stand with the Lord, then let him, he's a loser and you should get it all out in the air. Ladies, don't get involved with unbelievers; it violates the Word of God at every point. So just find out what it is that you're dating, believer or unbeliever, find out!

1 Samuel 25:36 *When Abigail went back to Nabal, he was holding a banquet in his house like that of the king. Nabal was having a good time and was very intoxicated. She told him absolutely nothing until morning's light.*

Here's another admirable quality of Abigail. She went back to Nabal; it would have been easy for her to stay with David and his men, but she didn't. The reason that she did was that it was right in God's sight. A note about the intoxication here. The Word of God has a completely different perspective on liquor than many, many people in this country. The Word of God makes the point that alcohol isn't the problem. The problem is sin and rejecting the authority of God's Word. That is the problem, not the alcohol. The alcohol is a convenient device, and we find that drunkenness in Scripture is condemned because of what it has been caused by, not because in itself it is something that is automatically wrong. There are several other reasons why the Bible warns against alcoholism. Being drunk leads people to commit all sorts of gross things. One thing leads to another. You can go in Genesis 19:32 to Lot and when he gets drunk he gets involved in incest with his daughters. Obviously then the Word of God condemns this sort of thing.

Ephesians 5:18, here's a final note, this is the ultimate answer of Scripture to alcoholism. ***“And do not get drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but be filled by the Spirit”*** What happens in drunkenness is you basically have anesthesia occur; anesthesia of the mind, anesthesia of the body; it operates through the nervous system. What is the opposite of anesthesia? Sensitivity; the filling of the Holy Spirit is precisely the opposite of drunkenness; it is a maximum sensitivity, both of the mind, of the body, and of the spirit. And that is a sign of the filling of the Spirit. It's not walking around talking in some idiot language; that is like drunkenness and you might as well, if you're going to do that, have fun and be drunk. But if you're going to be filled with the Spirit, for heavens sake, appreciate the dignity of the Third Person of the Trinity and understand that He doesn't go wandering around like some drunken idiot; the Holy Spirit is interested in recreating perfect humans, people that are honoring, people who are rational; people who use all of the facilities that God gave them, not just their tongue, but everything.

But then there's something else about Nabal having a good time and that is the joy of the filling of the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit gives joy, alcohol gives joy, both of them give something that is enjoyable. The Holy Spirit works on your mind and your emotions through your spirit side. Alcohol works on your mind and emotions through the body side. And what Paul is saying is the kind of joy you want is joy that comes from the spirit side, through the filling of the Holy Spirit, that gives you genuine joy, genuine enjoyment. And the best part is, there's no hangover.

Let's look at how alcohol is treated in God's Word. Here are the legitimate uses for alcohol in Scripture. For health reasons - Proverbs 31:6-7, 1 Timothy 5:23, and for enjoyment - Deuteronomy 16:13. In other words, they served alcoholic beverages at the feast. They were not served to produce drunks; they were served to a group of people that had wisdom. Now alcoholism is a big problem in this country, it's a devastating problem for some people. Some people have opted to be abstain from alcohol, and that's a legitimate option if you wish to do that. But you have no biblically authorized right to pick on believers who now and then take a sip of wine or something else. That is none of your business. For an alcoholic it would be a sin to look at it, you shouldn't have it anywhere around you, for you it is a sin, but for someone else it might not be. If you went to France and Germany you would see believers who regularly drink wine and beer; they have Christian fellowship and they would be drinking beer, what would you do? I can't drink, I'm an American, we American Christians don't drink. European Christians aren't bothered with this. So just relax about it.

Back to 1 Samuel, let's see what happened at this party. Abigail didn't walk in and say oh Nabal, you shouldn't have been drinking. She walked in and kept her mouth shut, probably said “the bum”, and then went to bed and relaxed and had a wonderful night's sleep. She was relaxed because she knew what she was going to do in the morning, she had a plan.

1 Samuel 25:37-39 *In the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him about these matters. He had a stroke and was paralyzed. (38) After about ten days the LORD struck Nabal down and he died. (39) When David heard that Nabal had died, he said, "Praised be the LORD who has vindicated me and avenged the insult that I suffered from Nabal! The LORD has kept his servant from doing evil, and he has repaid Nabal for his evil deeds." Then David sent word to Abigail and asked her to become his wife.*

Apparently Abigail must have told Nabal how close he was to getting slaughtered by David and his army. Maybe she reminded him who David was, what he had done to Goliath. He was so afraid, he froze up, literally. Now, is David rejoicing in vengeance? Or is he rejoicing in the fact that an obstruction to the plan of God has been removed? He's saying thank you God, for getting that obstacle out of the way.

1 Samuel 25:40-44 *So the servants of David went to Abigail at Carmel and said to her, "David has sent us to you to bring you back to be his wife." (41) She arose, bowed her face toward the ground, and said, "Your female servant, like a lowly servant, will wash the feet of the servants of my lord." (42) Then Abigail quickly went and mounted her donkey, with five of her female servants accompanying her. She followed David's messengers and became his wife. (43) David had also married Ahinoam from Jezreel; the two of them became his wives. (44) (Now Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim.)*

Chapter 26

Now the chapters run in sort of a strange sequence. Chapters 21-22 deal with a mistake that David did, remember he went to Nob and wound up getting the entire town massacred. David is learning during this persecution phase in his life. The second section, chapters 23-24 is David's deliverance from treachery. This wasn't a mistake of David's, this was simply an overpowering circumstance that he faced. Both situations are obstacles and God delivers David from them. Then in chapter 25 he's humbled by a woman, because he's out of it. Then in chapter 26 we have another overpowering circumstance, a pressure in his life as a believer.

And this alternating back and forth between mistake or sin and undeserved circumstance, is just simply the old familiar refrain of the every day life of the believer. David is going to gain his throne in the most unique way in history. You can read the annals of Sennacherib, you can read all ancient history and you'll always see they attained it either through gimmicks, force, or some political device. But David gained his throne strictly by grace. He did not earn it, and he did not deserve it. David made many mistakes on the way to the throne, and he sinned on the way to the throne and God got him there anyway because God is teaching him with these failures. David encounters both sin and pressure, just as we encounter sin and pressure, and our errors and rebellions against God are graciously dealt with on our way to being conformed to the image of Christ.

1 Samuel 26:1-2 *The Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Isn't David hiding on the hill of Hakilah near Jeshimon?" (2) So Saul arose and went down to the desert of Ziph, accompanied by three thousand select men of Israel, to look for David in the desert of Ziph.*

Chapter 26 deals with treachery again. The Ziphites are a group of troublemakers; a group of Judeans, Israelites. In 23:19 who is it that originally started Saul persecuting David? It was the Ziphites; the Ziphites are troublemakers.

The liberal critics of Scripture will take a passage like chapter 26 and they'll say look, compare 26 with 24 and it's basically the same story all over again, and they call it a doublet, which they define as having one event that has been reported contradictory through two different traditions; it's two different versions of the same event. You can't take a religious course or listen to any kind of a liberal clergyman today without hearing this.

Why do the liberals do this? They operate on human viewpoint. They are hostile toward both general and special revelation. And the thing the liberals cannot stand is to be reminded of the God of the Bible's existence. They try to create their own God that they prefer over the God of the Bible. And the thing that they can't stand, can't bring themselves to believe, is the fact that history has parallel types and connections in it. In other words, every event of

history is not something separated from itself, but history has a flow, continuity; prophecy is made, prophecy is fulfilled. In other words, history reveals the sovereignty of God, and that's the God of the Bible.

So when the critic faces two different events in history that look the same, they say that can't be two different events, they've got to just be one, you can't have history with that kind of a similarity to it, with that kind of a pattern to it; you've got to get rid of all these things and make history just one sequence of chance events, because if you don't, then history is going to show the sovereignty of the God of the Bible, who they've already decided at the beginning can't exist. So when there is reason in history they have to explain it away.

1 Samuel 26:3-5 Saul camped by the road on the hill of Hakilah near Jeshimon, but David was staying in the desert. When he realized that Saul had come to the desert to find him, (4) David sent scouts and verified that Saul had indeed arrived. (5) So David set out and went to the place where Saul was camped. David saw the place where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the general in command of his army, were sleeping. Now Saul was lying in the entrenchment, and the army was camped all around him.

So David thinks this is a good time to pay his respects.

1 Samuel 26:6-8 David said to Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" Abishai replied, "I will go down with you." (7) So David and Abishai approached the army at night and found Saul lying asleep in the entrenchment with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. Abner and the army were lying all around him. (8) Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me drive the spear right through him into the ground with one swift jab! A second jab won't be necessary!"

Joab is introduced here. This is part of that Adullam cave group. Remember David began his army with four hundred men. These men have now become six hundred, and out of this you have men like Joab, great military men that are going to play a great role in the history of their nation; Joab will become the commander in chief of David's armies.

The way the text is written would have you realize there is something abnormal in the way this military camp looks. It says "Abner and the army were laying all around him (Saul). Where's the guards? Why is everyone asleep? But David here is being given advice, similar to Chapter 24 when all of his men said let's kill Saul now; the cave incident. The big difference there is that Saul wasn't sleeping; he was going to the potty. So David's getting advice again, and it seems wise from a human viewpoint. It must have been awfully tempting... but David still knows he can't kill Saul. This time Abishai is saying you don't have to worry David, I'll do it, you don't even have to get your hands dirty.

1 Samuel 26:9-10 But David said to Abishai, "Don't kill him! Who can extend his hand against the LORD's chosen one and remain guiltless?" (10) David went on to say, "As the LORD lives, the LORD himself will strike him down. Either his day will come and he will die, or he will go down into battle and be swept away.

Here's the greatness of this guy David. David considers the authority of the office of king and he is not going to desecrate it. Now that is a lesson that comes the hard way. You may not like what your father and your mother tell you to do; but as long as you are in their house you respect their authority, period. And if you just can't stand what your parents tell you, get out; make it in your own. But while you are in the home you are under the authority of the father, delegated often through the wife. So when your father tells you to do something, he talks to you as your father, and that's the office. It's the same thing in the church with the word elder, it's an office, and you may not like who's in the office but you'd better respect it.

If there ever was a believer that ought to have been murdered it is Saul, but because of his office, David will not. He says, I can kill Saul, but that would be wrong. So the Lord could kill him, he could die a natural death, or he could die an accidental death in battle. So God will take care of it.

1 Samuel 26:11-12 *But may the LORD prevent me from extending my hand against the LORD's chosen one! Now take the spear by Saul's head and the jug of water, and let's get out of here!" (12) So David took the spear and the jug of water by Saul's head, and they got out of there. No one saw them or was aware of their presence or woke up. All of them were asleep, for the LORD had caused a deep sleep to fall on them.*

Ah, that's why they were able to do this, God had put them all to sleep. That word "deep sleep" is a special word and it means that God just put everybody out, it was divine anesthesia. God used it with Adam when he operated on him; that's how Eve came about. One of the most famous times that God gave anesthesia was in prison, with Peter. He put everybody sound asleep and the angel walked in and got Peter out. So every once in a while He does this and it just puts everybody out completely, you could walk around and play a trumpet and no one would know it.

1 Samuel 26:13-16 *Then David crossed to the other side and stood on the top of the hill some distance away; there was a considerable distance between them. (14) David called to the army and to Abner son of Ner, "Won't you answer, Abner?" Abner replied, "Who are you, that you have called to the king?" (15) David said to Abner, "Aren't you a man? After all, who is like you in Israel? Why then haven't you protected your lord the king? One of the soldiers came to kill your lord the king. (16) This failure on your part isn't good! As surely as the LORD lives, you people who have not protected your lord, the LORD's chosen one, are as good as dead! Now look where the king's spear and the jug of water that was by his head are!"*

This is just too good for David to resist, you can see David's sense of humor. There's a long ravine separating these two, and now David's going to have some fun. And for Abner, this is the most embarrassing situation militarily speaking. In a normal army back then this kind of thing could get you anything from a court martial to an execution.

David is just having a ball. Well, well, well, here's General Abner, there's nobody like you, a big brave general sacked out. It is just loaded, from beginning to end with sarcasm, and this is simply David having a good time ridiculing. Notice in verse 16 that he's now talking to the whole group of three thousand men. He says if you were in my army I'd kill you all. You can just see him holding up the spear and the water jug on the hill.

1 Samuel 26:17-20 *When Saul recognized David's voice, he said, "Is that your voice, my son David?" David replied, "Yes, it's my voice, my lord the king." (18) He went on to say, "Why is my lord chasing his servant? What have I done? What wrong have I done? (19) So let my lord the king now listen to the words of his servant. If the LORD has incited you against me, may he take delight in an offering. But if men have instigated this, may they be cursed before the LORD! For they have driven me away this day from being united with the LORD's inheritance, saying, 'Go on, serve other gods!' (20) Now don't let my blood fall to the ground away from the LORD's presence, for the king of Israel has gone out to look for a flea the way one looks for a partridge in the hill country."*

Here we go again. See, this is where the liberals say this is just the same incident; it's not the same incident at all, this may have happened many times. The point is that David every time presses home the issue, "Why do you chase after me when I haven't done anything?" In verse 19 David is saying if you chase me out of the country I will be under the control of other gods, only in Israel am I able to serve God. Outside in these other nations I become the victim of these other gods.

To show you how powerful this concept is, turn to 2 Kings 5:17, just to show you how strong a hold this had on the people's minds in the ancient world. Naaman, the Syrian, leaves Israel, and he wants to serve Jehovah, the God of Israel, so as Naaman leaves the geographical boundaries of the northern kingdom, he says this: *"If not, then please give your servant a load of dirt, enough for a pair of mules to carry, for your servant will never again offer a burnt offering or sacrifice to a god other than the LORD."* Now why does he need earth from Israel in order to worship God? Because when he constructs his altar it has to actually be on the literal dirt of Israel. That shows you how powerful the soil was in the people's minds. See how literal, how concrete it was?

It wasn't some abstract kingdom, it was the actual soil of the land. This is how important the land is to the Jews.

1 Samuel 26:21-25 *Saul replied, "I have sinned. Come back, my son David. I won't harm you, for you treated my life with value this day. I have behaved foolishly and have made a very terrible mistake!" (22) David replied, "Here is the king's spear! Let one of your servants cross over and get it. (23) The LORD rewards each man for his integrity and loyalty. Even though today the LORD delivered you into my hand, I was not willing to extend my hand against the LORD's chosen one. (24) In the same way that I valued your life this day, may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all danger." (25) Saul replied to David, "May you be rewarded, my son David! You will without question be successful!" So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.*

Again, this sounds like real repentance; he's confessing his sin, why Saul must be back in fellowship. But there's no change of heart in Saul; he's just repeating the same things, yeah, I sinned, I feel bad about it. Remember in chapter 24 how he wept, he had a great emotional response, and it obviously didn't mean a thing.

A characteristic of a compound carnal believer is they always will promise I won't do it again. God's heard that lots of times and you'll hear it. It's not smart to promise God you're not going to do it again because you more than likely will do it again. You can't fulfill that promise so don't make it. If you have ever been around an alcoholic this is the way they are, they've had a hangover and they're really fouled up, maybe done something really awful, and then they come whining and crying, oh I'll never do it again kind of thing, and it doesn't mean a thing. The only time this means something is when you have a genuine heart repentance, and usually this is operation prodigal son where a person has to really go down to the pigpen before this happens.

This is the last meeting between Saul and David in scripture. And in God's sovereignty, Saul's last words to David were a prophecy.

We're going to skip chapter 27 for the sake of time, but you can read it on your own. In Chapter 27 David gets nervous, and he fled to the land of the Philistines. I think David was just tired of being chased around, constantly on the run, and decided to leave until God worked it out so he could come back. Was this lack of faith on David's part? Did he not trust God to protect him?

Chapter 28

Chapter 28 begins a new section. This section of Samuel is devoted to the glorification phase of David's life, and you can't help but notice David's life has a remarkable parallel to the Lord Jesus Christ's life. David in this section is finally released from persecution and placed on the throne.

1 Samuel 28:3 *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.*

This is to remind us that there is no prophet in the government administration at this time. These people that were removed were demon possessed people, and Saul had them destroyed. Let's look at Deuteronomy 18:9-19, this gives you the background to this chapter.

Deuteronomy 18:9-19 *When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, you must not learn the abhorrent practices of those nations. (10) There must never be found among you anyone who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, anyone who practices divination, an omen reader, a soothsayer, a sorcerer, (11) one who casts spells, one who conjures up spirits, a practitioner of the occult, or a necromancer. (12) Whoever does these things is abhorrent to the LORD and because of these detestable things the LORD your God is about to drive them out from before you. (13) You must be blameless before the LORD your God. (14) Those nations that you are about to dispossess listen to omen readers and diviners, but the LORD your God has not given you permission to do such*

things.

There's a list here of things that God wanted to clean out of the kingdom. Can you imagine heating up some big bonfire and then letting your child walk through it? That's why these are abhorrent sins, because these are sins that demonstrate a rejection of God. So it has gone on and on until the conscience has been so calloused that mothers can watch their young children burn to death. A version of this goes on today when a mother can help strap on explosives to her son's body and willingly send him to a crowded marketplace to blow himself up. That's how far the rebellion against God can go in an unbeliever.

Another example is Nazi Germany. People think believing in molecules to man evolution makes sense. Well, look where evolution leads. It leads to attempts to play God to improve the human race, accelerate the so-called evolution of human beings. Adolph Hitler took evolution to the logical conclusion. You'll hear him from his own writings declare that that is what he's doing; he does it with full knowledge that this is where evolution leads, eliminate the weak and inferior and breed only the best to create a master race.

And today you have a group of scientists who are taking it to its logical conclusion, and carrying Hitler's agenda even further, believe it or not. And they do it under the guise of trying to improve humanity. These people want to use the burgeoning science of Transgenics to help along human evolution, develop "super-humans". Don't believe me? It's already happening, just Google Transgenics, and Transhumanism. It's rejecting God, and playing around with things we do not have permission from God to do.

Turn back to 1 Samuel 28. Saul had put away all the demon powers. Here is the ultimate humiliation for Saul. The last sin that the self-righteous, proud Saul does is the very sin that he looked down his long spiritual nose at everybody else. He engages in demonic communication; the very thing that he had a campaign against.

1 Samuel 28:4-6 *The Philistines assembled; they came and camped at Shunem. Saul mustered all Israel and camped at Gilboa. (5) When Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was absolutely terrified. (6) So Saul inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him — not by dreams nor by Urim nor by the prophets.*

He has reason to be afraid. Saul knows he's going to be removed, and now he begins to get this awful feeling that now is going to be the time, now is when God is going to lower the boom. God did not speak to Saul by dreams because his heart attitude wasn't right. He didn't speak to him by Urim, because he killed all the priests; the one that is left, Abiathar, is with David. God didn't answer him by prophets, because Samuel was dead. But Saul is thinking, I had no word from God, I tried. He did try to get dreams, he sought a priest, and apparently sought for a prophet. In 1 Chronicles 10:13 we see God's view of this.

1 Chronicles 10:13 *So Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD and did not obey the LORD's instructions; he even tried to conjure up underworld spirits.*

Saul said look, I didn't have a word from God so I had to consult the witch. I tried and God didn't answer. What is God's answer? Deuteronomy 18; that was the Word of God, and when he went to the witch he had already turned his back on God's Word. So Saul did not seek the Lord; he thought he did, but actually he didn't. And the answer for all of us, whether we are in the same spiritual situation as Saul or not, is Psalm 139:23-24.

Psalms 139:23-24 *Examine me, and probe my thoughts! Test me, and know my concerns! (24) See if there is any idolatrous tendency in me, and lead me in the reliable ancient path!*

If you're in Saul's place you don't know the first thing about your own heart. You are so blinded by rebellion there is no way you can analyze your problem, no way apart from the Word of God. And the only thing you can pray is that God be merciful to you to open your eyes to where the issue is in your life. God is merciful, but He is not going to dump His mercy continually upon people who reject it, over and over.

1 Samuel 28:7 *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."*

This is his contact with the demonic; the Hebrew for "medium" means a lady who is demon possessed, or who is in very close contact with demon forces. This is the one type of person that Saul was noted for eliminating. So Saul, finally in desperation goes against that for which he was publicly known. Now a self-righteous legalist like Saul is going to contradict the façade that he has tried to convince everyone about.

But there's something else that's interesting here. The very fact that in this situation the people in his administration could locate one of these people so very quickly indicates that really this campaign, like so many political campaigns, was only skin deep; he really hadn't eliminated the demonic people; if he had, how come his servants knew where they were located? And if these lieutenants knew of this lady, why haven't they gotten rid of her before?

1 Samuel 28:8 *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." (9) 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?" (10) But Saul swore an oath to her by the LORD, "As surely as the LORD lives, you will not incur guilt in this matter!"*

Here you find Saul hardening his heart even more. Here's the mark of a truly desperate man, a man who has opened up his heart to the doctrines of demons. He makes an oath, and what is the content of the oath? It is a vow never to enforce the Word of God. Isn't that what it means? Doesn't the Word of God say that if you meet one of these people you're to kill them? And Saul says, don't worry woman, I vow to you I will disobey the Word of God in your case.

Now how can we do what Saul's doing at this point? If the God of the universe says I want you to get in the Word now, I want you to pray, I want you to stop your worry and trust Me, I have written these promises to you, I have promised to take care of your every need and you are not believing Me, and I don't like it. That's the voice of the Holy Spirit and that's how He speaks. We can always argue back; no I can't do it just now, I'll do it tomorrow. But every time you do this you're rebelling; as much as if you were to go out and commit the most flagrant sin.

Isn't this interesting; look what happens to self-righteousness; it's self-destructive, isn't it. The one sin that he wants to be known that he cleaned up from the nation, and what does he do? He commits the sin.

1 Samuel 28:11-12 *The woman replied, "Who is it that I should bring up for you?" He said, "Bring up for me Samuel." (12) When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out loudly. The woman said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!"*

Normally in situations like this these people are not really calling up spirits of dead people. They are demons that pretend to be them, they can impersonate voices of real people, and they can tell you things about the dead person that sound very valid, things that no one except the dead person and maybe a few living ones could know. How do the demonic powers know this? We don't know, but they do apparently have capabilities in this area. Some Bible commentators think that is what is going on here.

Down through the years of the church this verse has caused commentators many, many problems. The early fathers, Martin Luther, John Calvin, all objected to the interpretation that Samuel actually came up from the dead. Luther said this can't be because the dead believers can't be under the beck and call of demon powers, and therefore this must be a put-on.

But we're going to point out that this is real in this case because God in His sovereignty brought Samuel forward, and it has to do with this first verb. "When the woman saw Samuel," now Saul did not see Samuel; whatever form Samuel is in, only the woman sees him. We have no evidence that Saul at any point in this text actually sees Samuel. The

woman is in a trance and all of a sudden she sees Samuel. Now why should that cause her to scream out? Apparently because this is something unusual, something happened this time that never happened before. Every time before when people came by there would be a voice that would speak, and the woman would hear the voice but she never saw anything like this before.

The very idea of a person coming up from the dead really shocked even this woman. Why would she be shocked if it were a routine thing for the dead to appear? It teaches us something very interesting. Any attempt to speak with the dead is to invite contact with the powers of darkness who impersonate the dead.

Now how does the woman make the connection between seeing Samuel come up out of the ground and recognizing Saul? She's either somewhat clairvoyant, or she just identifies Saul with Samuel – who else would be trying to call up Samuel? She's screaming for two reasons: because of the unusualness of this thing and because the king, who is known for doing away with this kind of thing is right there before her.

1 Samuel 28:13-14 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!" (14) 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 knelt down.

That is why she's so scared, one like a god coming up. This should also tell you, incidentally, that the Bible is quite serious when it locates Sheol under the earth. Of course it's not God, or a god, but she sees something that she has never seen before. Maybe in all her workings with the occult she has seen demon forces but she has never seen anything like this. By the way, playing with the occultic powers and forces as many young people are doing, you are tampering with something that is tremendously threatening and very, very dangerous.

Verse 14 shows you something else about the dead. Are they recognizable apart from their body? Yes, the Mount of Transfiguration, Elijah and Moses didn't have their resurrection bodies but they were identifiable. Samuel here does not have his resurrection body but he is identifiable. What are we to make of this? That somehow when the spirit and soul leave the body they take on a corporeal form, they are identifiable. And he comes up and he has a robe on.

What does the robe of Samuel mean? Well, first it meant it was his badge of authority, as a prophet he wore the robe that only a prophet could wear. I wonder if Saul wanted to ask the woman, see lady, if part of the robe is torn?

1 Samuel 28:15 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."

The word "disturbed" is another thing that tells about the intermediate state of the dead, at least in the Old Testament dispensation. It is the word that was used to wake from sleep, when somebody wakes you, what'd you get me up for? That's the same word that's used here. Now, we know in the New Testament that to be absent from the body is to be face to face with the Lord. But to what degree of perception we have in the intermediate state, which is the time you die until the time you're rejoined with a resurrection body, which all believers will receive in the Rapture, we do not know. Samuel says that he's been disturbed, he's been woken up. And it would seem to teach that in the Old Testament the intermediate state was simply like sleep.

1 Samuel 28:16-19 Samuel said, "Why are you asking me, now that the LORD has turned away from you and has become your enemy? (17) 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! (18) 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. (19) 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!"

The counsel given by the prophet recognizes one principle, submission to God's authoritative Word, totally and completely, no matter how much it hurts. That is the only advice given. So he says why do you come to me, if God has departed from you and become your enemy.

Verse 19 is the sentence of doom; the decree at last is coming to pass. Is this a decree that had to come to pass? Yes. It was given in 1 Samuel 15. Was there any hope of Saul stalling it off? No, because it was pronounced as sovereign in 1 Samuel 15. Then doesn't this destroy the volition of Saul? No, because since chapter 15 on down to chapter 28 how has Saul responded to situation after situation? Have you noticed any change in his behavior? God's sovereign decree is big enough to encompass volition. That's the mystery of the whole thing. How it works nobody knows; all we know is the Bible says that's the way it is.

By the way, verse 19 shows that Saul was a believer, just to correct some people that say oh, no believer could do this. Samuel says you and your sons will be with me, and we know Samuel is a believer. A lot of people don't like the idea that Saul was a believer, that he is in heaven, but there it is.

1 Samuel 28:20 *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.*

He's afraid, he's desperate, drained, Now you would think, why does this guy keep doing this? He would rather commit suicide at this point than just bow his knee and surrender his pride to God's sovereign grace. Look at the hardness, look at the suffering, look at the horror that he is not willing to give up because if he did he'd have to give up his pride. Do you see how deceitful the heart is? Now the demon powers are operating here but don't blame them. They just amplify what his flesh is doing and his flesh simply loves itself.

1 Samuel 28:21-22 *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. (22) 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." (23) 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. (24) 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. (25) She brought it to Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they arose and left that same night.*

Notice the "left that same night" is there. Remember another familiar refrain in the New Testament, after Jesus hands the bread to Judas Iscariot, so do your work, and Judas walks out into the night. That phrase is just there to show there's no repentance, there's no change. Has there been emotion in the passage? Yes. Has there been tears in the passage? Yes. What's lacking? A change of heart; is Saul's destiny going to change? No, no change of heart.

Chapter 31

We'll skip chapters 29 and 30 for time's sake, David and his men are still in exile in Philistia in those chapters, and please read them on your own. We'll go to the last chapter of 1 Samuel and the end of Saul.

We've had over and over a recurrence here and there of a note of doom is coming upon this man, not because God has predestined him in the bad sense of the word, but in the sense that, allowing Saul full responsibility, Saul nevertheless, you might say, has damned himself.

1 Samuel 31:1 *Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel. The men of Israel fled from the Philistines and many of them fell dead on Mount Gilboa.*

The Jordan valley runs north and south, and running northwestward is the valley of Jezreel; actually it's connected to another valley that runs in from the sea coast up here, the valley of Megiddo where one of the battles of the battle Armageddon will be fought. And the Philistines have tried to split Israel in two by making an invasion through the north. This way they split off all the tribes here and all the tribes in the northeast. It is soundly conceived from the

military standpoint. There's a highland here that is the Israelite strong point, Mount Gilboa. It's actually not one mountain, it's a whole range of mountains in that area.

1 Samuel 31:2 The Philistines stayed right on the heels of Saul and his sons. They struck down Saul's sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua.

And so Jonathan is killed here with two of Saul's other sons. So ends the life of a wonderful man, a great believer, and one of those men that I can't wait to meet in heaven. Jonathan didn't deserve this fate, his father's stupidity condemned him, but he died being faithful to God and to his father.

1 Samuel 31:3 Saul himself was in the thick of the battle; the archers spotted him and wounded him severely.

From what's said in the text here and in 1 Chronicles, there must have been tremendous blood loss, the wound is apparently a very bloody one and he has a lot of internal injuries which means he knows he is not going to survive.

1 Samuel 31:4-5 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. (5) When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own sword and died with him.

Several things are in this text. This is one of the rare times in the Word of God that you have to deal with euthanasia or mercy killing. Saul calls at this point for a mercy killing, and it is rejected. Turn to Proverbs 31:6 which seems to give about the only guide Scripture does for this kind of a problem.

Proverbs 31:6 Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitterly distressed;

As Bible-believing Christians, we have to operate from our presuppositions. My presupposition is that God's word defines life for me. Proverbs 31:6 appears to be the only thing God says about the problem of pain at the point of death. The idea is that it is merciful to drug a person into unconsciousness at the point of their death, but that's the only positive command we've got in Scripture, to deal with the problem of dying. Make them unconscious, take them out of their pain, but beyond that, euthanasia does not appear condoned in the Word of God.

Now verse 4 again shows the mentality of self-righteous Saul. He is not concerned with the uncircumcised in the context of the Abrahamic Covenant, in the context these people are enemies of God. The context is that it would be shameful for my honor, my dignity, to be killed by the uncircumcised. Let me die valiantly, let me die heroically. And so to the very last breath Saul is a very proud man who can't step down from his pride even for a minute to look up at the grace of God. Even at his mode of death it must be Saul's way; Saul must not be humiliated by the Philistines.

So here's the self-righteous Saul, even with his last breath, making one last plea to God, God at least let me die heroically. God doesn't do that, he dies miserably and his body is going to be desecrated. This is a principle and it's an important one. Here we've got a cop out, suicide; I'm too proud to solve my own problem so I'll blow my brains out, a brilliant solution. Suicide is murder, your life is not your own, you didn't make it, God gave it to you and therefore you can't take your own life without violating a command of God. Now if suicide is not condoned in the Word of God it's probably for the same reason mercy-killing isn't. It's the fact that when we get down to the last breath of life we want to go out our way, not God's way. God says sorry, you're checking out My way.

1 Samuel 31:6-7 So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men died together that day. (7) 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.

Verse 7 is not continuing the story; it is a parenthesis, like I have told you about reading Hebrew history because inevitably you will talk to some sidewalk skeptic some place that says there's a contradiction in the Bible and usually it's because he heard it from somebody who heard it from somebody who read a book about somebody who read a book about the Bible. Hebrew history is written logically, like all other Ancient Near Eastern literature. Egyptian literature is written the same way, we're not making a special case of the Bible. Logically, not chronologically! Verse 7 summarizes everything that happens from verse 6 all the way into 2 Samuel.

So look at the mess we've got. Now when David assumes the throne what kind of a kingdom does he have to start with? Not a big area - Judah, that's about it, a little bit of Ephraim, all the northern tribes are shot, the whole coastal plain is under Philistine control, so there's going to be some struggles as David tries to solidify the mess that he inherited. David comes into a very bad political situation here.

1 Samuel 31:8-10 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. (9) 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. (10) They placed Saul's armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and hung his corpse on the city wall of Beth Shan.

Notice they didn't know at first that they'd killed Saul. They just knew that they had a military victory and then when they were surveying the battlefield they said hey, look at this, here he is. And they cut off his head and abused his corpse. A very humiliating end to the righteous proud Saul.

The cutting off of the head is what David did to Goliath. Remember David took it to the tabernacle, the house of Yahweh. All right, when the Philistines cut off somebody else's head where do they put it? In the house of their god, in this case that's Ashtaroth, the house of Ashtar, she was a goddess, the goddess of warfare; in the Ugaritic texts you can read how she appeared, she just wallowed in blood. She was pictured as a vicious bloody virgin. She was one of the perpetual virgins, which, by the way, has crept down and has become part of the Roman Catholic tradition behind the virgin Mary which isn't Biblical at all. Praying to Mary is a pagan concept passed down from goddess worship in some of these pagan religions. The concept of the perpetual virgin is all over the ancient east.

It's interesting, the phrase "to announce the news" is the Hebrew word that comes over into the Greek, and comes over from the Greek into the English as "evangelize." It's the word that means announce good tidings, it is the word from which we get the "gospel". That is how the word "announce good tidings" was used in the ancient world. It was used to announce a victory. So why do you think the news of the New Testament is called the gospel? It's not someone singing "Just As I Am" and everybody trotting down the aisle or something. Sorry, that idea is not in Scripture. The word "gospel" in Scripture has to do with victory, a tremendous victory militarily speaking.

So, the "gospel" in the New Testament is the victory over Satan which Christ secured on the cross, which doesn't make sense unless you believe in the principalities and powers, in a literal Genesis, unless you believe in all these things. You can't talk about the gospel unless you believe in a literal Old Testament.

1 Samuel 31:11-12 When the residents of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, (12) 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. (13) They took the bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh; then they fasted for seven days.

So they got together a little raiding party. It had to be a raiding party because this body was obviously guarded. By the way, nowhere in Scripture do you have cremation mentioned except here. Now some have said why is it that Christians are often times anti-cremation? The reason is not because the Bible says so much about it but because cremation in some areas was associated with defying the resurrection. Cremation was used by many religious groups to stop the resurrection, to defy God to resurrect that body that had been burned.