

1 Samuel 28:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

Analysis

Saul's command to seek a medium (Hebrew: 'eshet ba'alat-ov,' a woman possessing a spirit) represents his ultimate spiritual betrayal. Having enforced God's law against such practices, he now desperately violates it himself. The location 'En-dor' (spring of the dwelling) places the medium in Issachar's territory, requiring Saul to travel past enemy lines. The servants' ready knowledge of her location suggests the purge of mediums was incomplete or that such practices persisted secretly.

Historical Context

Necromancy and spirit consultation were common throughout the ancient Near East but explicitly forbidden in Israel (Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:10-11). The survival of practitioners despite royal prohibition indicates either incomplete enforcement or persistent popular demand.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What forbidden sources of guidance tempt people when legitimate means seem closed?
2. How does desperation lead to spiritual practices we would normally condemn?

Interlinear Text

בְּעֵלֶת אֲשֶׁת לִי בְּקַשׁ שָׁא וְלִי עֲבָדִי שָׁא וְלִי יֹאמְרֵה
Then said Saul of her And his servants Seek H⁰ me a woman that hath
H559 H7586 H5650 H1245 H802 H1172

יֹאמְרֵה בְּהָאָדָרְשָׁה אֶל יְהִי אֶלְכָה אֲזְרַשָּׁה אֲזְרַשָּׁה
a familiar spirit H1980 H413 to her and enquire H⁰ Then said
H178 H1875 H559

בְּעֵלֶת אֲשֶׁת הַבְּהֵא אֶל יְהִי עֲבָדִי
that hath me a woman a familiar spirit
H1172 H802 H178

בָּעֵד בְּעֵד
at Endor
H⁰ H5874

Additional Cross-References

Acts 16:16 (Spirit): And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

Psalms 83:10 (Parallel theme): Which perished at En-dor: they became as dung for the earth.

1 Chronicles 10:13 (Spirit): So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

Joshua 17:11 (Parallel theme): And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Beth-shean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of En-dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries.

Habakkuk 2:3 (Parallel theme): For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Leviticus 19:31 (Spirit): Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.