

The Witch of Endor

READING

1 Samuel 28

1 Samuel 17

Acts 13

1 Samuel 13:14

Yahweh has sought for himself a man after his own heart, and Yahweh has appointed him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept that which Yahweh commanded you

I heard this contrast in a recent sermon by Steve Nicholson. It's a really challenging idea.

1 Samuel 28 has the account of a Philistine invasion during the reign of Saul. Saul is on the throne, appointed by men as the king of Israel. David is not yet king, but he's already anointed by Yahweh to be the king of Israel. There's a whole sermon in those two sentences, but ... for another time.

In 1 Samuel 28, the Philistines have invaded and are demanding attention. When Saul sees them he's afraid. He doesn't know what to do. He asks Yahweh, but Yahweh doesn't answer. So Saul goes to a witch! And from the story, it seems she was a witch with actual power. That she really did summon up the spirit of Samuel. The prophet of Yahweh who had died several years before.

But this is no surprise. Saul was only on the throne because the people had rebelled against Yahweh and said, "We want a king like all the countries around us do". So they elected their own. Strong. Powerful. Able. The kind of king that you would expect worldly people to choose. Someone who looked good on the outside. But on the inside Saul was weak, insecure, even dishonest.

Sadly this is often how we elect our leaders now too. Too much about the outward appearance, and not so much about the inner integrity, about honour, or about their willingness to serve our country rather than serving their own ends.

Back in 1 Samuel 17 there is another account of a Philistine invasion. The one with Goliath. When David was just a boy. When David saw the Philistines he was angry because they were insulting Yahweh. Outwardly David is "just a boy". But a boy with integrity, honour, and a faith and a deep respect for Yahweh that Saul had probably never even contemplated for himself. And even though just a boy, David had already defeated a bear, and a lion. He might not have looked it, but this boy was a warrior.

How about you?

When you have a big decision to make. When you need help of advice. Where do you go? Musicians? TV stars? Astrologers? Peers who probably know even less than you do? Do you think money, or promotion, or a bigger house will solve all your problems?

Or do you go only to Yahweh, and trust his advice with your whole life. Even if you make less money. Even if you lose power and influence. Even if the World looks at you and thinks, "loser".

Learn from history.

David won that day. David won the rest of his life.

Sure he messed up, big time. But at the end of his life, Yahweh said, "look at David, a man after my own heart".

At the end of your life, isn't that what you want Yahweh to say that about you?