

FIRST SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 27 IN REVIEW

1. To what foreign country did David finally flee? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many men did David have with him? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what city did he flee? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What wives of David were with him? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was king of the country? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What city was given to David and his men? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long did David stay in the city? \_\_\_\_\_
8. To whom did the city later belong? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Against what people did David make raids? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Against whom did David say he made raids? \_\_\_\_\_

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 28

- Vv. 1- 2 *David with Achish in battle.* The Philistines began a campaign against Israel; and David was forced to go along with his benefactor, the king of Gath.
- Vv. 3- 6 *Saul forsaken by God.* Samuel was dead. Those that had familiar spirits had been put away out of the land. Saul had no one to give him guidance. The Lord did not answer him because Saul had disobeyed the Lord. The priests were not able to get an answer by Urim or Thummim. Since Saul had slain most of the priests there were none of these to help him. The only other prophet of whom we have knowledge was Gad, and he was with David. Saul was utterly abandoned.
- Vv. 7-14 *Saul seeks the witch of En-dor.* The law of Moses had commanded the people of Israel not to allow a witch to live in their midst. Saul

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had put out of his country most of those necromancers, wizards, and witches. Some of his soldiers knew of the home of the witch in En-dor, and he disguised himself and went to her.

Vv. 15-25 *Samuel's appearance.* The Lord raised Samuel and allowed him to make a posthumous appearance to Saul. This appearance frightened the witch and greatly distressed Saul.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A man forsaken of God is really all alone.* Saul makes a pitiable picture as there was no prophet, priest, or any other servant of God to advise him. We should learn from this occurrence that it is a terrible thing to turn one's back on God. We should remember that God is near to those who draw near to Him.
2. *There is life after death.* The witch of En-dor was not able to raise Samuel. She was frightened and cried out when Samuel was raised by the Lord. Samuel's appearance gives us evidence of life after death. We should all look forward when we will be raised to live a life everlasting.

Preparations for Saul's Last Battle, 28:1—29:11.

*David With Achish in Battle.* 28:1, 2

And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

1. *What was the demand of Achish on David?* 28:1

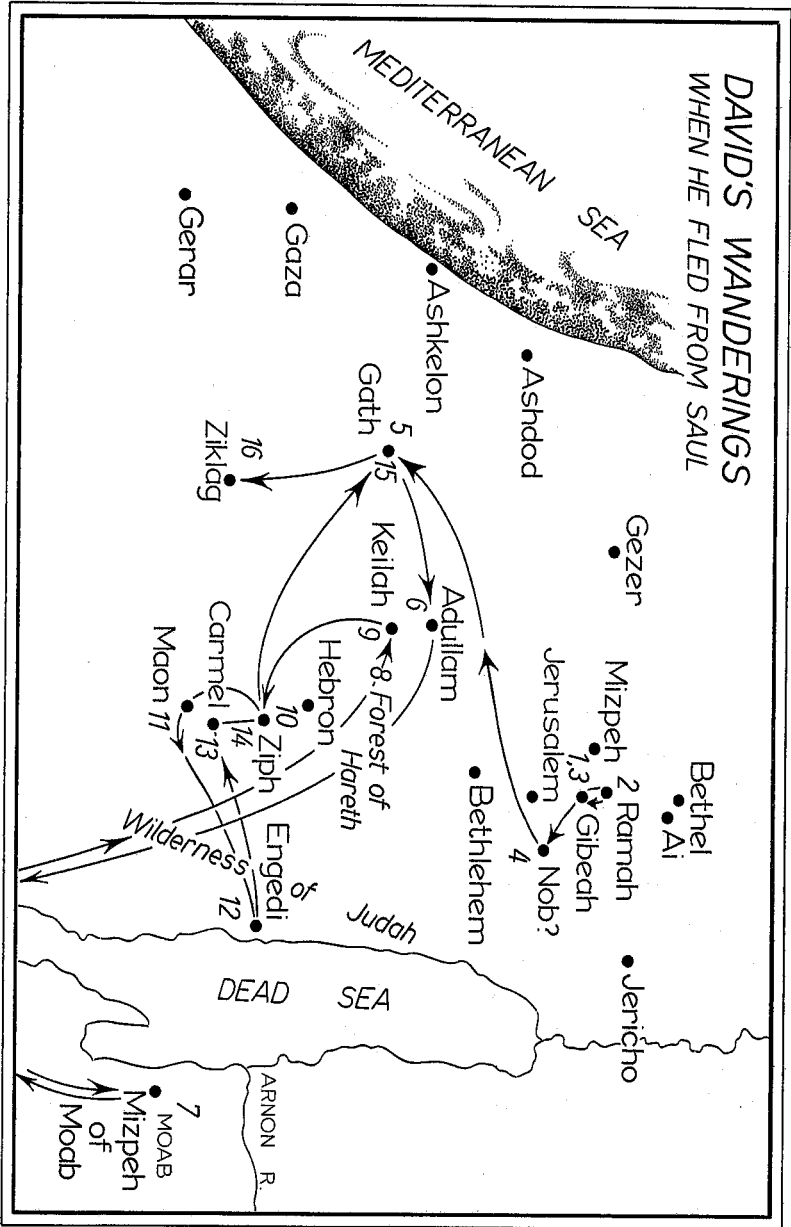
In exchange for the protection which David had received from Achish, David was expected to serve as a soldier with the Philistines. This was a high price to pay for the little bit of security which the Philistines afforded David. It has well been said that he who gives up a bit of his liberty in order to insure some security is worthy neither of liberty or security. David found himself in a position where he was expected to fight with the Philistines against his own people.

2. *Did David intend to fight against Saul?* 28:1, 2

While David was living in Philistia, the Philistines gathered their armies together for a campaign against Israel. Achish sent word to David that he was to go with him in his army along with his own men. David answered ambiguously. His words contained no distinct promise of faithful assistance in the war against the Israelites. There are no grounds for inferring that David was disposed to help the Philistines against Saul and the Israelites. Judging from his previous acts, it would necessarily have been against his principles for him to fight against his own people. Nevertheless, in the situation in which he was placed he did not venture to give a distinct refusal to the summons of the king. He was undoubtedly hoping that God would show him a way out of the conflict between his conviction and his duty to obey the Philistine king. He had no doubt prayed earnestly about it; and the faithful God helped his servant; first of all, by the fact that Achish accepted his indefinite declaration as a promise of unconditional fidelity and still more by the fact that the princes of the Philistines overrode the king.

*Saul Forsaken by God.* 28:3-6

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city.



## DAVID'S WANDERINGS

### WHEN HE FLED FROM SAUL

(The places listed are shown on the map.)

1. *Gibeah*; I Sam. 19:1-17.
  - a. Jonathan intercedes for David; 19:1-7.
  - b. Saul tries to spear David; 19:8-10.
  - c. Michal helps David escape; 19:11-17.
2. *Ramah*; I Sam. 19:18-24; Ps. 59 (?).
  - a. David visits Samuel; 19:18-19.
  - b. Saul and his messengers prophesy; 19:20-24.
3. *Gibeah*; I Sam. 20.
  - a. David absent from feast of new moon; 20:1-34.
  - b. Jonathan warns David with arrows; 20:35-42.
4. *Nob*;<sup>1</sup> I Sam. 21:1-9.
  - a. Ahimelech gives David food and weapons; 21:1-6, 8-9.
  - b. Doeg the Edomite witnesses Ahimelech's act; 21:7.
5. *Gath*; I Sam. 21:10-15; Ps. 34, 56.
  - a. David feigns madness.
6. *Adullam*; I Sam. 22:1-2; Ps. 142.
  - a. David gathers 400 followers.
7. *Mizpeh of Moab*; I Sam. 22:3-5.
  - a. David leaves his parents here for safety.
8. *Forest of Hareth*; I Sam. 22:5-23; Ps. 52.
  - a. Saul slays priests at Nob; 22:5-19.
  - b. Abiathar comes to David; 22:20-23.
9. *Keilah*; I Sam. 23:1-12.
  - a. David saves Keilah from Philistines; 23:1-6.
  - b. Saul pursues David; 23:7-12.
10. *Ziph*; I Sam. 23:13-23.
  - a. David escapes to the wilderness; 23:13-14.
  - b. Jonathan's last visit with David; 23:15-18.
  - c. Ziphites reveal David's hiding place to Saul; 23:19-23.
11. *Maon*; I Sam. 23:24-28.
  - a. David narrowly escapes Saul.
12. *Engedi*; I Sam. 23:29—24:22.
  - a. David spares Saul.
13. *Carmel*; I Sam. 25:1-44.
  - a. Samuel's death; 25:1.
  - b. Nabal refuses food for David's men; 25:2-13.
  - c. Abigail's intercession; 25:14-35.
  - d. Death of Nabal; 25:36-38.
  - e. David marries Abigail; 25:39-44.
14. *Ziph*; I Sam. 26:1-25.
  - a. Ziphites reveal David's hiding-place again; 26:1-3.
  - b. David spares Saul; 26:4-25.
15. *Gath*; I Sam. 27:1-4.
  - a. David dwells with Achish.
16. *Ziklag*; I Sam. 27:3-12.
  - a. David receives Ziklag from Achish; 27:5-7.
  - b. David raids southern tribes; 27:8-12.

<sup>1</sup> The location of Nob is uncertain. It is thought to be near the Mt. of Olives near Jerusalem.

And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

### 3. *Why had Saul put away the witches? 28:3*

Saul had kept the Law as recorded in Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; and Deuteronomy 18:10. Since Samuel was dead, Saul had no prophet to whom he could turn. He had chased out the people with familiar spirits and the wizards. He could not go to a false prophet. He could find no spiritual assistance of any kind, good or bad, valid or invalid.

### 4. *Where was Shunem? 28:4*

Shunem was a little town in the valley of Jezreel. The Philistines had marched to this far point between Mount Carmel on the west and Mt. Gilboa on the east. This was a famous battlefield, being the scene of the battle against Sisera in the days of Deborah (Judges 4:7). Gilboa was the mountain on the northeastern edge of the plain of Jezreel. Shunem was the modern Shulem or Solam, some eight miles away from Mt. Gilboa.

### 5. *Why was Saul so alarmed? 28:5*

Since he had met and defeated the Philistines in earlier battles, Saul's great alarm can be attributed only to the feeling that the Lord had forsaken him. No doubt the Philistine army was formidable, but he had met the armies of the Ammonites soon after he became king. He mustered 330,000 warriors out of Israel on that occasion. Using good military strategy and completely trusting in

God, Saul had been victorious against these eastern enemies (I Samuel 11:11). Throughout his career he had fought many battles against the Philistines, but his falling into the clutches of the evil spirit repeatedly must have enervated Israel's first king. He had been unsuccessful in his wicked attempt to kill David and David's continued wise behavior had convinced Saul that God was with David and not with him. All of these things combined left Saul a cringing coward.

6. *What were God's ways of revealing His will?* 28:6

Three of the various ways in which God revealed himself in ancient times are mentioned in connection with Saul's vain attempt to learn the will of God. God often spoke to people in dreams. This had been His way of indicating His will to Joseph (Genesis 37:5). The Urim was a part of the high priest's wearing apparel, and it was used to find out the Lord's will as the priests made inquiry of Him (Exodus 28:30). Prophets were active throughout most of Israel's history. There were bands of prophets in the days of Samuel, and God revealed His will through these men (I Kings 13:1). We need to remember that God "who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Saul's desolate condition is emphasized by the statement of the fact that God did not answer Saul by any of these means.

*Saul Seeks the Witch of En-dor.* 28:7-14

7 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.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto

me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10 And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.

13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

14 And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself.

#### 7. Why did Saul go to the witch of En-dor? 28:7

The Philistines had collected their forces in the plain near Shunem. Saul's army was encamped on the slopes of Mt. Gilboa, some two miles away but plainly within sight of the enemy. The very sight of the enemy had thrown Saul into dread terror. He was greatly anxious about the outcome of the battle and inquired of the Lord what might be the results of the coming conflict. The Lord had left Saul as He had withdrawn His spirit from Samson during the time of the Judges; and He did not answer Saul, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Instead of repenting and humbling himself before Jehovah, Saul plunged stubbornly forward in an



attempt of his own invention to find the verdict of the future. When living prophets gave no answer, he thought that a dead one might be called up, as if a dead one were less dependent upon God than the living, or that, even in opposition to the will of God, he might reply through the arts of a conjuring woman. Truly, if he perceived that God was hostile to him, he ought to have been all the more afraid, lest his enmity should be increased by his breach of His laws. But fear and superstition never reason.

8. *Where is En-dor? 28:7b*

En-dor still exists in a village under the ancient name on the Shoulder of *Duby* or Little Hermon about two miles from Saul's camp. Saul must have made a pitiable sight as he disguised himself and left the security of his camp to go down into the valley to find the home of the outlawed witch. Perhaps he had to slip along through the night past the Philistine outposts in order to reach this eerie home. His ill-fated journey is a sad commentary on the lot of a man who disobeys God.

9. *Why did Saul disguise himself? 28:8*

Saul would not want to be recognized by any Philistine scout whom he might meet. Most of all he knew that the woman would not practice her illegal art if she recognized him as king. He must have been ashamed to wear his kingly robes and make such a pitiable request of a spiritualist. His disguise would not be able to hide his stature, however; and this outstanding feature of Saul's person may have helped the witch to unmask Saul when Samuel did come back from the grave.

10. *Why had witches been banned? 28:9*

When Israel came into the promised land, they were "not to learn to do like the abominations of these nations." There was not to be found in the land any who caused his son or his daughter to pass through the fire (in other words, a worshipper of Moloch). Neither were there to be any who practiced sooth-saying, or a wizard, or a

snake-charmer, or a conjurer, or one who pronounced a ban, a necromancer and wise man, or one who asked the dead to be brought up. Moses was given this in the Law, and he grouped all the words which the language contained for the different modes of exploring the future and discovering the will of God, for the purpose of forbidding every description of soothsaying. At the head of the list was placed the prohibition of Moloch-worship, to show the connection between soothsaying and idolatry. Saul had acted in accordance with God's law when he banned all these from the kingdom (See Numbers 23:23 and Deuteronomy 18:9 ff.).

11. *Why was the woman suspicious? 28:9*

The witch of En-dor was afraid that her visitor was laying a snare for her. She was afraid that she would be reported to the king and eventually be killed. She knew that the Law said, "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22:18). She knew that God had ordained that there should not be found among the Israelites any "that use divination or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deuteronomy 18:10, 11). She had to be cautious in order to practice her illicit profession. When Saul gave her his word that she would not be punished, she was willing to go ahead.

12. *Did Samuel appear to the witch? 28:12*

The early Christian writers, the Protestant reformers, and many later Christian theologians assumed that there was no real appearance of Samuel, but only an imaginary one. More lately the opinion has been expressed that the apparition of Samuel was merely a delusion produced by the witch without any background at all. More recently orthodox commentators have been almost unanimous in the opinion that the departed prophet did really appear and announce the destruction; not, however, in consequence of the magical arts of the witch, but through a miracle

wrought by the omnipotence of God. This is favored by the narrator who speaks throughout of the appearance not of a ghost, but of Samuel himself. It is also sustained by the circumstance, that not only do the words of Samuel to Saul create the impression that it is Samuel himself who is speaking, but his announcement contains so distinct a prophecy of the death of Saul and his sons, that it is impossible to imagine it can have proceeded from the mouth of an imposter, or have come from Satan.

*13. How did the witch recognize Saul? 28:12*

The woman must have concluded that she was in the presence of Saul because he had asked to have a seance with Samuel. Samuel and Saul had been rather closely associated in the political and religious activities of the kingdom of Israel. The woman must have known about Samuel's death and Saul's desperate effort to find out the will of God. The very fact that Saul had asked for Samuel to be brought back from the dead probably raised a question in the woman's mind from the very beginning of the interview. As Samuel was raised from the dead by the power of God and the woman was frightened by this miraculous event, she undoubtedly was then not afraid to express her conviction. Saul's stature would have been a feature that he could not disguise. There was none other in Israel as tall as he. He stood head and shoulders above all the others. This imposing stature coupled with the strange request for Samuel's being brought back from the dead would have convinced the woman of the identity of her strange visitor.

*14. In what form did Samuel appear? 28:14*

Samuel's appearance is not to be regarded as the appearance of one who had risen in a glorified body; but though somewhat spirit-like in its external manifestation, so that it was only to the witch that he was visible, and not to Saul. It was merely an appearance of the soul of Samuel, which had been at rest, in the clothing of the

earthly body and dress of the prophet, which were assumed for the purpose of rendering it visible. In this respect, the appearance of Samuel, rather resembled the appearances of the angels in human form and dress, such as the three angels who came to Abraham in the grove at Mamre, and the angel who appeared to Manoah, with this exception, however, that these angels manifested themselves in a human form, which was visible to the ordinary bodily eye, whereas Samuel appeared in a spirit-like form. In all these cases the bodily form and clothing were only a dress assumed for the soul or spirit, and intended to facilitate perception, so that such appearances furnish no proof that the souls of departed men possess material corporeality.

*15. How did Saul know that it was Samuel? 28:14*

The apparition was clothed in the prophet's mantle such as Samuel was accustomed to wearing. Saul asked the woman to describe the apparition and she said that it was an old man. Samuel had died after several years of work among the people of Israel. Since Saul had asked for Samuel in the first place, he must have realized that God had granted his request.

*Samuel's Appearance. 28:15-25*

15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17 And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, *even* to David:

18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor

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executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto this day.

19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

21 And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.

23 But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

24 And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof:

25 And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

16. *In what way was Samuel disquieted? 28:15*

The actions of the woman imply most unquestionably that she saw an apparition which she did not anticipate. This leads us to believe that she was not really able to conjure up departed spirits or persons who had died, but that she might merely pretend to do so. Even if it is

concluded that the woman had a certain demoniacal background, the appearance of Samuel differed essentially from everything that she had experienced and effected before, and therefore filled her with alarm and horror. The very fact, however, that she recognized Saul as soon as Samuel appeared, precludes us from declaring that all this was nothing more than jugglery and deception. Her recognition of Saul when Samuel appeared may be explained from their close association during Samuel's lifetime and the woman's knowledge of this, or from God's granting her clairvoyant power even as He had granted the appearance of Samuel himself.

17. *Why did Samuel reveal David as the next king? 28:17*

The purpose of God had already been formed and was about to be fulfilled. Samuel thus announced it definitely to Saul. Saul had taken very extreme measures. Although he explained that he was sore distressed, he did not have reason to ask God to disquiet Samuel. The Philistines were oppressing Israel. God had indeed departed from Saul. Saul was unable to get any revelation of the will of God from the prophets or by dreams. All of this was not reason enough to resort to illegal measures. Saul should have known that if the Lord was departed from him, he was helpless. This final and irrevocable revelation of God's utter rejection of Saul was in keeping with the drastic steps which Saul had taken. If Saul had any doubt about the outcome of his own kingdom it was removed by this revelation from the prophet who had been returned from the dead.

18. *What was the basic reason for Saul's being rejected?*  
28:18

A two-fold reason is given for Saul's being rejected. Samuel said it was because he had not obeyed the voice of the Lord. This was probably a reference to his failing to wait for seven days as he was ordered by Samuel before the two were to sacrifice. Samuel also said that it was

because he had not executed God's fierce wrath on Amalek. On both these occasions Samuel had rebuked Saul while he was alive. Coming back from the dead he summarized the rejection of Saul as being on account of these two failures.

19. *How would Saul be with Samuel?* 28:19

Samuel told Saul that he would die in the battle the next day. The two men would thus be together in the world of the departed spirits. Here is another indication of the deep conviction held by the Old Testament people with regard to life after death. Such expressions as one's being "gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:8), this statement of Samuel's with regard to Saul, and David's statement that his dead boy could not be brought back but that he would go to him (II Samuel 12:23) all verify the faith of the Israelite people in life after death.

20. *Why did Saul fast?* 28:20

Saul was mentally perturbed and excited of body and soul. His deep mental anguish left him without appetite. Hannah's deep distress left her in a similar condition (I Samuel 1:7) as did the apostle Paul's repentant spirit (Acts 9:9). In addition, he may have fasted as an outward sign of his attempt to be holy, hoping in this way to win favor with God.

21. *Why was the woman concerned for Saul?* 20:21

The witch had a sincere respect for her sovereign, and she did not want to see him expire because of lack of nourishment. She also knew that he would need every ounce of his strength as he made his way back to his camp and entered into the final battle with the Philistines. Her reasoning was good. She reminded Saul that she had listened to his request and cooperated with him in the practice of her necromancy, and she felt that it was only fair that Saul in turn listen to her appeal on his behalf. The woman's request was not enough in itself: but as his servants continued to insist that he eat something, he finally

arose from lying prone on the ground and did eat as he sat on the edge of the bed. This final ministration to Saul's physical needs on behalf of his loyal subject is a touching picture of life in Palestine in the eleventh century before Christ. She performed all the menial tasks necessary in the preparation of the meal and served it with loyal devotion. Thus strengthened, Saul and his servants returned to their camp and prepared for the final battle.

### CHAPTER 28 IN REVIEW

1. What kind of people had Saul banned from Israel? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where were the Philistines encamped? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where was Israel's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
4. By what means had Saul inquired of God? \_\_\_\_\_
5. For what kind of woman did Saul seek? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did the woman live to whom Saul went? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Whom did Saul ask the woman to disquiet? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what garment was Samuel arrayed? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Did Saul see Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Did Saul hear Samuel's voice? \_\_\_\_\_