



Study Guide: 1 Samuel – Chapter 28

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This study guide provides an educational overview of 1 Samuel Chapter 28 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

1 Samuel Chapter 28 presents a dramatic and somber episode in the life of King Saul, highlighting his desperation and spiritual decline. This chapter reveals Saul's attempt to seek guidance through forbidden means after God's silence, illustrating the tension between faith and fear. It serves as a powerful narrative about the consequences of disobedience and the dangers of turning away from God's provision.

Context

The events of 1 Samuel 28 occur during a critical period when Saul is facing the Philistine army. Earlier chapters have shown Saul's repeated failures to obey God fully, resulting in God's rejection of him as king. At this point, Saul is isolated, fearful, and without prophetic guidance, as the prophet Samuel has died. The chapter captures Saul's spiritual crisis as he tries to find answers through a medium, an act forbidden by God's law. This moment marks a turning point toward his tragic downfall.

Outline

The chapter begins with Saul seeking advice but finding no answer from God through dreams, prophets, or Urim. In desperation, he consults a medium in Endor, disguising himself to avoid detection. The medium summons the spirit of Samuel, who delivers a grim prophecy about Saul's impending defeat and death. The chapter closes with Saul preparing for battle, deeply troubled by the message he has received.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1–3: Saul seeks guidance but receives no answer from God through the usual means—dreams, prophets, or Urim. This silence reflects his estrangement from God due to his disobedience.



Verses 4–7: Saul, in fear and desperation, approaches a medium at Endor, disguising himself to avoid recognition. This act reveals his willingness to break God’s commandments in his distress.

Verses 8–14: The medium is initially frightened but complies, summoning the spirit of Samuel. Samuel’s appearance and words confirm the seriousness of Saul’s situation and the certainty of his downfall.

Verses 15–19: Samuel’s message is a prophecy of defeat and death for Saul and his sons. This pronouncement underscores the finality of God’s judgment against Saul.

Verses 20–25: Saul is deeply distressed but prepares for battle as Samuel instructed. The chapter ends with Saul’s somber acceptance of his fate, highlighting the tragic consequences of his earlier choices.

Key Themes

One major theme is the danger of turning away from God and seeking forbidden sources of guidance. Saul’s reliance on a medium illustrates the spiritual peril of disobedience and fear. Another theme is the inevitability of divine judgment when one persistently rejects God’s commands. The chapter also explores the tension between human desperation and divine sovereignty, showing that attempts to circumvent God’s will lead to tragic outcomes.

Cross-References

This chapter connects with Deuteronomy 18:10-12, which forbids necromancy and consulting the dead. It also relates to earlier passages where Saul’s disobedience leads to God’s rejection, such as 1 Samuel 15. The prophecy of Saul’s death echoes the themes of judgment found in 2 Samuel 1. Additionally, the silence of God parallels moments in the Bible where God withdraws His guidance due to persistent rebellion.

Application

This chapter challenges believers to trust God even in times of uncertainty and fear rather than seeking unauthorized or forbidden sources of guidance. It warns against the spiritual dangers of disobedience and the importance of maintaining a close relationship with God. The story encourages reflection on how desperation can lead to poor decisions and



emphasizes the need for faith and obedience as the foundation for receiving God's direction.

Summary

1 Samuel 28 is a poignant narrative illustrating the tragic consequences of Saul's spiritual decline. His failure to seek God faithfully and his turn to forbidden practices result in a grim prophecy of defeat and death. The chapter serves as a sobering reminder of the importance of obedience, the dangers of fear-driven decisions, and the sovereignty of God's judgment. It invites readers to examine their own reliance on God's guidance in all circumstances.