

Kids' Chronicle

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BY CINDY BASSETT

The witch of Endor

Nobody in Endor suspected that one of the three men who came late one night seeking the witch was King Saul. In the first place, he looked nothing like a king in his old tattered clothing. But more importantly, it was King Saul who had issued the law banning witchcraft. Anyone caught practicing the black arts would be sentenced to death.

They finally found the witch only after considerable difficulty. She lived with a raven in a dark, slimy cave on the outskirts of town. As they approached her gloomy abode, they heard her chanting some strange words over and over.

"Ecnō ta evael ot uoy dnammoc I," she kept repeating.

Before they had even announced their arrival, she jolted them by suddenly appearing at the opening of the cave with her raven perched on her shoulder.

"What do you want?" she snapped. "Can't you see that I am busy?"

King Saul's voice came out in a quaver. "I need to speak to someone from the other side."

"Don't you know that it's forbidden for me to call forth the dead? Besides, I haven't used my witchy powers very much lately. I'm having trouble even getting rid of the flies that are trying to take up residence in my home."

"I won't betray you," King Saul promised, "and I'll pay you well."

Without another word, the witch motioned them within. "Cozy, little place, don't you agree? We even have a fireplace," she said, pointing to the fire burning in the center of the cave.

"Who do you want to speak to?" she asked.

"The prophet, Samuel who just died," King Saul replied, still not revealing his identity.

The witch closed her eyes and seemed to go into a trance for several minutes. Suddenly, her eyes snapped open and flashed angrily, "You have deceived me!" she shrieked. "I know that you are King Saul! Get out!"

"Please, I am a desperate man," the king stammered. "It is the eve of our battle against the Philistines. Tomorrow our enemies will attack us. I must know what to do!"

The next words that came forth from the witch sounded exactly like the voice of the dead man Samuel. "Why do you come here to bother me?" he asked.

"I would never disturb you if I hadn't been so troubled myself!" King Saul cried. "What will happen in the war tomorrow?"

"I told you when I was alive that you had displeased God by your disobedience," Samuel told him.



Illustrations by Kathy Welsh

"Another king, David, has already been chosen to rule in your place. Tomorrow you and your sons will join me here in the land of the dead after the Philistines defeat you."

Samuel's words were still echoing in the hollowness when King Saul collapsed in a heap. Even the witch took pity on his crumpled form and rushed to get water to revive him.

She insisted on feeding them before they went out again into the night. It was eight miles back to the camp on Mount Gilboa, where the battle would take place tomorrow.

Read More About It: 1 Samuel, Chapter 28:3-25.

Q & A

1. Why was it wrong for King Saul to consult with the witch?
2. What things do people rely on today to help them decide about their future?

The Bible Times

1010 B.C.

Mt. Gilboa — King Saul died yesterday after a fierce battle between the Israelites and their long-standing enemies, the Philistines.

The king was wounded by an arrow during the attack in which his army was defeated. He died by falling on his own sword to avoid being taken prisoner.

Saul ruled Israel for 40 years. His regime was weakened by years of war with surrounding nations as well as by his poor health and depression problems.

Before Saul became king, he was anointed by the prophet, Samuel, as a sign of being chosen by God to rule Israel. However, for several years, it has been rumored that Saul had since been rejected by God because of bad ruling decisions. In a war with the Amalekites, the king kept some of the booty despite warnings from God — through Saul — to destroy everything.

Sources indicate that some time ago, David, a young shepherd boy, was anointed by Samuel in a private ceremony to succeed King Saul.

Saul's three sons were also killed in the battle yesterday.

Bewitching Crossword

God wants us to trust our lives to him. When Saul went to see the witch, he was relying on her predictions for his future. Use the clues below to fill in the crossword. Answers on page 20.

ACROSS

1. Another name for a witch; also means average anything.
2. The study of the heavenly bodies to predict the future.
3. A meeting where a witch tries to call forth the dead.
4. Another name for a wizard.
5. Something claimed to be seen by someone with special powers.

DOWN

6. A witch casts this on someone by repeating a series of words.
7. Name for witch's brew that is usually made in a big cauldron.
8. Another name for witchcraft; comes in black or white.
9. Predicts the future through signs of the zodiac.
10. Common form of witch transportation.

Talking to God

Dear God,
My future is in your hands.
Help me to trust my life to you.

"Why are you trying to find out about the future by consulting witches and mediums? Can the living find out the future from the dead? Why not ask God?"

Isaiah 8:19.

King Solomon's Wisdom

"A person is a fool to trust himself. But those who use God's wisdom are safe."

Proverbs 28:26.

Bible Trivia

David, the second king of Israel, came from a large family. How many brothers did he have?

Send answers to *Catholic Courier Bible Trivia*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your name and address with your entry. All entries must be received by November 5, 1992. A winner will be selected at random from all the correct entries submitted. The winner will receive a gift, courtesy of Logos.

Last month's winner was Loran Guff, who correctly named Methuselah as the oldest person in the Bible. He was 969 years old.

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