

Day 33 – Mar. 15

This is one of the strangest passages in all of scripture (and we're comparing it with talking donkeys and water-breathing dragons!) It is probably a fruitless exercise to try to discern the science behind Saul's conversation with the recently deceased Samuel. Or at least that's a study for another time and another purpose. Some will write off the bible as "lies" because of passages like this, and some will decide that they can indeed raise the dead because of it. But for us, we need to ask, "What does this tell me about God and God's people?" For that is the purpose of the scriptures from cover to cover.

Saul in his fear at the approaching hoard of an army turns to God. But God is silent. No dreams with God's answers. The sacred lot doesn't work (not sure how drawing a lot doesn't work, but there it is). No prophets come to Saul's aid. So Saul decides that if God won't answer, he'll go to the one who always answered for God – Samuel. He breaks not only God's law but his own, and summons a medium, a witch if you will, to force Samuel to speak for God, and in so doing, force God to speak.

And it works! Samuel comes and is forced to speak for God. God is forced to answer Saul. But as always, God will not be mocked. God's answer through Samuel is not at all what Saul was hoping for. Samuel's answer? "God is always faithful. He promised to take the kingdom away from you, and He has." We don't often think about God's faithfulness when it means something unpleasant to us. We only think of God's faithfulness in terms of helping, giving, or protecting us. Maybe we should broaden our idea of God as much more than our personal genie or vending machine. God is faithful to us, even to the point of refusing to bless our sinful desires and selfish endeavors.

When you feel like your prayers are falling flat, to whom do you turn? Do you wait patiently on the Lord, trusting in His timing? Or do you try to force the issue, acting and hoping God will bless your actions? Let me simply suggest you spend some time in Ps. 40 and think about the fact that all of the blessings that are listed there come after patiently waiting for God.