

no one else seemed to know, and to be able to see into the future. Saul did not know what to do in the face of the great Philistine army; and in his desperation he tried the only possibility he believed was open to him -- he consulted a medium.

It is interesting to speculate on the question why Saul had spared this particular medium when he had previously outlawed or driven out or killed all of the other mediums in the land. Had he used her services before? Had he simply missed this one in his great roundup of mediums and spiritists? Or had he reserved this one medium "just in case" he needed her services? Saul's instructions to his servants to "seek a woman who is a medium" does not answer this question for us. For if Saul had used her services before, he would not have been likely to admit it. If he had simply missed this one in his great roundup, he would not have been likely to go out of his way to call attention to the fact that his big push to rid the land of mediums have not been entirely successful! And if he had given secret instructions to spare one top-quality medium 'just in case,' he probably would not have admitted it. Saul was not widely known for his willingness to admit mistakes or failures, and had probably become secretive in view of real or imagined plots to remove him from the throne in favor of his chosen successor, David.

*Verses 9-10* -- "But the woman said to him, 'Behold, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those who are mediums and spiritists from the land. Why are you then laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?' And Saul vowed to her by the Lord, saying, 'As the Lord lives, there shall no punishment come upon you for this thing.'"

The medium was very suspicious, and very reluctant to reveal herself as a medium and use her alleged powers, knowing that King Saul (who was in disguise) had outlawed or killed all the mediums and spiritists he knew about in Israel. But Saul assured her with a vow that no harm would come to her.

Here we must pause and ask, What would make the medium willing to risk her life by doing what the stranger asked?

(1) This stranger could be trying to trap her into an admission that she is a practicing medium.