

messages from them -- messages that reveal something unknown or something future. By coming to the medium, Saul showed that, at least to some extent, he believed in spirit mediumship. He knew that consultation of mediums was forbidden by God (and he had recently shown that he knew this, by outlawing or putting to death most of the mediums and spiritists in the land); yet Saul was desperate for guidance and knowledge of the outcome, and God had refused to answer him!

(2) The person who believes what the medium consulted says invests a degree of trust in that medium as one who really has mediumistic powers. This usually reveals a *great desire to believe* what the medium tells him or her, upon very little evidence of the truth of what the medium says.

In the present case the kinds of information the medium provided Saul as identifying marks, on the basis of which Saul "knew" that it was Samuel, consisted of facts that any child in Israel could have supplied! Think of the three "marks" of identification the medium supplied: (1) the spirit was a man (Samuel was certainly that); (2) the spirit was an *old* man (Samuel was old when he died; and (3) the spirit was wrapped in a *robe* (Samuel usually wore a robe, as did most men of his day, especially old men, who felt the cold more keenly). There you have the definite, unambiguous marks of identification! It could only be Samuel and no one else! Actually, this tells us more about Saul's tremendous desire to believe than it does about the identification of the spirit apparition! Notice that the *medium* did not identify the spirit apparition as Samuel; *Saul* did. Saul asked for Samuel, and Saul identified the spirit as Samuel. Of course, from then on the medium doubtless acquiesced to Saul's identification.

*Verse 15* -- "Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?' And Saul answered, 'I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has departed from me and answers me no more, either through prophets or by dreams; therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do.'"

Note also that here, as in verse 16, we read, "And *Samuel* said..." And in verse 20 we read, "Then Saul ... was very afraid because of the words of *Samuel*." If we take these phrases out of the context of this incident, out of the context of spirit mediumship, and out of the context of the teaching of Scripture concerning the nature of the intermediate state of the righteous, it is possible to understand these uses of the name Samuel as