

The Tragedy of Dying Without God//1 Samuel 28:13-20; 31:1-13//*The Search for a King*

Vision night/CMO...

For the last several weeks we've been studying the life of David, and this weekend we're going to look at a theme the Bible talks about quite frequently... *Is it possible to be very active in the church of God and not really know God at all?* Not talking about coming only at Christmas and Easter and being a hypocrite and missing God, but being *very active*, and missing God. That may seem like a dumb question and not really think about it?

- Well, is it possible to be **married** to someone for 40 years and not really love them? Sure.
- Does walking through a **maternity ward** automatically make you pregnant?
- Does owning a **Mac computer** automatically make you cool? (No—just annoying.)

According to the Bible, being religiously active has little bearing on whether or not you actually know God. In fact, sometimes, it's harder for religious people to really find God than it is for non-religious people.

Guys, you really need to pay attention to this... some of the people most self-deceived about their spiritual state are active in a church.

Today we're going to see in graphic detail what that looks like and the tragic end of it.

(A lot of times people feel who aren't active in church feel like what happens in church is a bunch of Christians get together and talk down to everybody else. Well, today, this passage of Scripture is directed primarily at people in the church. So, if you are not a Christian, you get to sit there while I say a bunch of things to other Christians that you've always wanted to say. I get to yell at everyone, on your behalf, in Jesus' name.)

1 Samuel 28:3-20 [3] Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city.

Now Saul had put the mediums (people who communicate with spirits; write horoscopes; answer 1-900 calls) and the necromancers (those are people who talk with the dead) out of the land.

- They all lived in a place called Hogwarts now.
- The point here is that this was a good thing Saul had done. He had rid the land of demon worship.

[4] The Philistines assembled and came and encamped at Shunem... [5] When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.

- This is the repetitive theme of Saul's life: *fear*. Fear is one of the defining characteristics of anyone living apart from God:
 - fear of the **future**;
 - fear of **death**;
 - fear of being **bankrupt**;
 - fear of **unexpected problems**;
 - fear of **what everyone else thinks**.
- If you have fear in your life, it is a sign God is not in the right place... 1 John 4:18.
- The presence of fear means the absence of God
- Lots of religious people live with fear...

[6] And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets.

- Now, Urim is the OT equivalent to the Magic 8-ball, except it was supernaturally guided.
 - Most scholars say the Urim were 2 rocks – one was called Urim, the other called Thumim... on one side of each rock was written ‘yes,’ and on the other side was written ‘no’. When the people needed direction, the priest would throw down the rocks. You could have ‘yes, yes’—that meant, “get on it;” ‘no, no’ meant “probably shouldn’t.” But if it was ‘yes, no’ or ‘no, yes’ then that meant there was no clear direction given from God.
 - In Saul’s case, the priest would throw down the rocks and he would get ‘yes, no.’ Do it again, then ‘no, yes.’ Yes/no. No/yes. This was like when you’re doing the 8-ball and you keep getting “Ask again later/Ask again later.” If that happens like 300 times in a row you might think something is up... God was supernaturally not giving Saul an answer.
- Some of you, your life just changed. Where can I buy a set of those?” A. Coffee Bar. 19.99; all proceeds go to CMO. Can’t promise you they’ll work anymore. B. We actually only sell them at the Saturday night service, which is why you should go to that.
- No, I don’t want you going home and getting 2 rocks...: this is an OT provision that doesn’t carry over into the NT.

[7] Then Saul said to his servants, “Seek out for me a woman who is a medium(a witch), that I may go to her and inquire of her.” And his servants said to him, “Behold, there is a medium at En-dor.”

- Saul was like, “En-dor, Endor... isn’t that where all the Ewoks live?” And they said, “Yeah.”

[8] So Saul disguised himself as a Jedi warrior and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, “Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you.”

[9] The woman said to him, IRONY “Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the necromancers from the land. Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death?”

- Could we stop for a minute? Seriously... What kind of sorceress is this? She can supposedly see the future, but she can’t see through the costume of the guy in front of her? These things are almost always fake...
- You ever watch these people... “I’m seeing something... Did you ever have a grandparent? Yes. Did they die? Yes. Well, how’d you know? Did they die of natural causes? No, actually they got shot in the face. “Well, naturally, they’re dead.” (That’s a little ‘Brian Regan’ for you)

[10] But Saul swore to her by the LORD, “As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.”

- I was going to make a joke about this... but the horror of it. Here is Saul, now trumping God. “Don’t worry about God’s judgment, I’ve got you covered... it’s all good.”

[11] Then the woman said, “Whom shall I bring up for you?” He said, “Bring up Samuel for me.”

- I’m not sure what Saul was thinking here. I just don’t think Samuel would have been the best choice to conjure up in a Satanic ritual.

[12] When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice.

- This is almost a little humorous. She’s like, “Whoa...” She’s not used to this working. She’s like, “Usually... I just blow some smoke and play a little Enya and then move this little oujia thing around and make stuff up...”
- This time she’s like (caressing crystal ball)... Ahhhh!

And the woman said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? Wait... You are Saul.”

- There you go, Einstein. Now you're seeing things clearly. Seeing present...

[13] The king said to her, "Do not be afraid."

- At this point, she had to be like, "What, Saul? You think I'm afraid of *you* at this point? I got a dead prophet in front of me who was known to hack the enemies of God into pieces before everyone's eyes and you think *you're* the one I'm afraid of at this moment?"

He's like, Shh, shhh... What do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth." [14] He said to her, "What is his appearance?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage.

- Which has always been Saul's problem... he showed more respect and concern for Samuel than he did for God.

This next part is great... [15] Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

Saul answered, (Look, I'm really sorry to bother you... I know you're really busy being dead and all, but...) "I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do."

So, Samuel says, vs. 16, [16] And Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has turned from you and become your enemy?"

"Let me get this straight. God has turned from you, so you're asking me for advice? *God* is your enemy, and rather than reconciling with him, you're looking for favors from me?"

At this point Saul probably said, "But I asked the Lord and he wouldn't tell me anything." And Samuel says, "That's right... because what the Lord wants to hear from you is repentance." See what he says

next? [17] ...The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. [18] Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day.

- Saul's never really repented of that. He's never really repented of running things his way, and he wants to just ignore it.
- Some people wonder why God won't hear their prayers, and it's because they have some area of un-confessed sin in their life.
- They say, "God, why won't you talk to me?" God says, "We were having this conversation earlier when you walked out..." If you want to talk where we left off, that is fine. Some of you haven't really spoken to God in 15 years because that was when you said, "No," and you've never really dealt with that. You've just brushed it under the rug.
- God will abundantly pardon, but you have to come to Him on His terms. God is not going to be your pimp.

Vs. 19, Samuel says, [19] Moreover, the LORD will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. (That is, in the grave. Last thing you want to hear from a ghost) The LORD will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines."

[20] Then Saul fell at once full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night... [25] Then (he) rose and went his way that night.

- Saul, repent!
- ***I've told you before that crisis is not always the best time to seek God.*** Here you see, Saul is crying out to God, but he's not crying out to God for God, He's crying out to God to get him out of a jam. He's not coming to God on God's terms, He is trying to use God to get him out of jam. In a crisis you are desperate, gullible, and you'll grab hold of anything that you

think will keep you afloat. You're not necessarily trusting God, surrendering to his plan.

- And the proof of that is that as soon as you're out of crisis, you go back to the way you were before you got in crisis.
- Hear me: I'm not saying you *shouldn't* seek God in a crisis, I'm just saying you need to ask God why you are seeking Him. Are you just trying to use Him to get out of a jam, or are you realizing that God is God, and the only thing you should trust and the one you should serve?
- A lot of people who go through deathbed conversions because they are scared of hell. I realize that hell and judgment are compelling reasons to seek God, but you can't just use God to get you out of hell.
- A lot of people who go through death bed conversion, if they ever got off their deathbed, they would go back to the way they always were, and that is not repentance. Conversion is not just fleeing from hell, it is fleeing *to God*.
- **Write this down: A repentance that would not change you in life won't save you in death, either.**
- ... which is why I say crises and deathbeds are not a good time to seek God, because your mind is muddled and desperate at that point and you might be seeking God for the wrong reason.
- I'm not saying don't seek God in a crisis or on your deathbed. I'm saying you need to consider whether you are using God or surrendering to Him.

Now, I want to take you to 1 Samuel 31 and show you how Saul's life ends... but 1st, let me just point out something...

- Remember a few weeks ago I told you that rebellion, even small rebellion, was to God like witchcraft and areas of compromise in our life were like idolatry?
- And I explained that a lot of us have trouble seeing that because our small areas of compromise don't seem that bad to us...
 - You're like, "God, it's just a small area of disobedience." "So what if we're sleeping together.

We're not hurting anybody. We love each other."

"Who cares if we don't tithe? It's not like I'm robbing a bank."

- Here you see that what God said was not just a poetic image or an exaggeration. Saul's small compromises have grown into full-orbed dependence on the demonic.
- **That always happens. You may never pray to Satan or visit a witch, but something will begin to play the role of God in your life.**
 - *Here's how it works:* Small rebellion, small disobedience, separates you from the security of knowing you are in God's will.
 - **Like a chain link....** (say you have a car being towed by another, held together by a chain... **How many chain links need to break...?**).
 - Saul breaks fellowship with God, through what most people would call a small sin, but the result is he is no longer assured of God's approval and joy... so he turns to some other source of the supernatural.
- This happens for all people. Something always plays the role of the supernatural in your life.
- **You say, "Not me. I'm not religious." Maybe not, but something in your life will always be ultimate.** There is something you turn to as your source of security; something you depend on for guidance, something you lean on for happiness and fulfillment.
- **I've explained multiple times here that you worship whatever you depend on for life, happiness, fulfillment and security.**
- When that is anything besides God, that is idolatry and even a form of following Satan, because he is ultimately the author of self-worship.
- Many of you have never gone to a witch or done a séance, but...
 - You treat you money like a god. You serve it; you worry about it; you won't be generous with it;

- Many of you treat romance like a god—you'll do anything to get it and hold on to it;
- Many of you treat your family like a god—you won't entertain any plan of God that would separate you from your family.
 - Every once in a while I hear about someone who knows they are called to the field but their parents won't let them go... those people are not Christians, I don't care how long they've gone to church or if they've been chairman of the deacons. They've never dealt with the primary question of Christianity and that is where their ultimate allegiance lies. Family is their god, not God.
 - They may sit in church, but God considers them to be the sons and daughters of Satan.
- Either God is your God with no conditions and qualifications, or you are an idolater and in the path of Satan.
- **Is that harsh? It's just that there is no middle-ground.**

Let me show you the end of Saul... **1 Samuel 31:1** [1] Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. Just like Samuel had said. [2] And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.

- Saul watches his army fall part, and then his sons die right before his eyes, including Jonathan. (Parents, your children will suffer for your mistakes.)

[3] The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers.

[4] Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mistreat me."

- (To the end, Saul is worried about what other people are going to do with him.)
- Don't you think at this point He'd be concerned with the fact that God had departed from him and Samuel says God is His enemy?

But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. [5] And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him.

[6] Thus Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, on the same day together. [7] And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those beyond the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled. And the Philistines came and lived in them. What just happened? Instead of driving the Philistines out, they have lost the few cities they had back to them.

[8] The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. [9] So they cut off his head and stripped off his armor and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people. [10] They put his armor in the temple of Ashtaroath, and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan.

- This is how the whole book of 1 Samuel ends. One commentary I was reading said this: *"And now it was night; and the headless bodies of Saul and his sons, deserted by all, swung in the wind on the walls of Bethshan, amid the hoarse music of vultures and jackals."*¹

¹ Chuck Swindoll, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny*, 204. From Alfred Edersheim, *The Bible History: Old Testament*, vol. 4, 149.

- Let me say that again: *That's how 1st Samuel ends.* **Israel's earnest desire for a king** because they didn't trust God to meet their needs; and their selection of the one they thought would be the perfect king... Saul, who turns out to be a **coward** that **consults demons** in a time of trouble...
- He **doesn't defeat** the Philistines; in fact, they've lost ground to the Philistines, the Philistines are now living in Israel's cities.
- Saul's last act is to watch his **own sons die** and then he commits **suicide**.
- Then his **armor was stripped** and put on display in the temple of Ashtaroath as a testimony to how strong the Philistine god was, and then his **body is fastened** up on the wall of a Philistine city to hang their in shame until the birds eat away his flesh.
- **It is impossible for the Bible to give a more devastating end to a life.**

What is really ironic is that all this happens in the same geographic place where Saul was crowned. Where Saul was killed and hung up was within eyeshot of where he was crowned.

Do you remember the promise spoken over Saul at his coronation? Let me read it to you:

[10:1] Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. ... Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you."

- So much promise, such utter disappointment.

In the same place where all those glorious promises were spoken over Saul, his body hangs in shame, forsaken by God.

What a tragedy. Saul's problem was not the Philistines. Saul's problem was not Goliath. Saul's problem was Saul. God could have

conquered all his enemies, but Saul wouldn't trust God. He trusted himself. Saul wouldn't delight in God, he delighted in himself.

There are a few things we need to notice about Saul...

1. Saul kept up religious practices without ever knowing God

- He did a lot of good things... he purged the land of witches and wizards
- He fought God's battles against the Philistines. (Not very well, but he did it. He was active in his church, went on mission trips, gave to the offering.)
- He was a good dad and family man.
- He even prayed to God when he was in a jam

2 essential things Saul was missing:

- **(A) Trust in God:** this was shown by his failure to obey. He was never convinced God was trustworthy, so he never fully yielded his life to Him...
 - Look at this interpretation of Saul's life in **1 Chronicles** (1 Chronicles is like a parallel book) **10:13-14**, "Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. *He did not seek guidance from the Lord.*" You say, "But he did seek guidance, the Urim and the Thummim..." But he wasn't seeking God in those situations, he was seeking a way out of a jam.
 - He wanted to use God.
 - **"Our problem is that we don't want to find God to know Him; we want to find Him in order to use Him to make our lives work."** **Larry Crabb**
 - How many people am I talking to like that?
- No trust in God; this was fueled by a second problem: **(B) No satisfaction in God:**
 - God was never enough for Saul.

- When God told Saul that he should not enrich himself off the Amalekites, Saul said, “Well, being God’s king is not enough. I want to be rich, too. I want monuments to myself.”
- When God told Saul that David would be king, Saul said, “Being God’s child is not enough. I want to be king. I have to be king.” Hunts David down.
 - That ever happen to you...? God doesn’t give you something and you are like, “God, no. I want this, too (rich, married, famous, successful). And if you’re not going to give it to me I’m going to get it myself.” And you start to hate the David in your life that God has given those things to. You’re jealous. You hate them... and you know it has nothing to do with them, it has to do with the dissatisfaction you have with your own life.
- **There are two things that have to be true of you if you going to know God: you have to trust Him completely and you have to be satisfied in Him.**
 - All of our spiritual problems go back to one of 2 things... **We don’t understand how God feels about us; we don’t value that enough.** (x2: You either don’t know...)
- **That’s why the Gospel is the remedy for rebellion.** In the Gospel, you see how God feels about you, and you see what a treasure God is.
- **The foundation of knowing God is knowing how He feels about you and valuing that...**
- **Here’s the lesson from Saul:** People who don’t grasp those 2 things don’t know God, no matter how fervently religious they are.
 - The Gospel of Matthew talks about many people who will say to Jesus on the last day, “Lord, didn’t we...” and He is going to say, “Depart from me, I never knew you.” I used to hear that and interpret that as a

percentage... only the upper 10% will make it... and I’d go out and try harder... I’m going to give more, be more moral, be more regular in my quiet time... then God won’t say that to me.”

- But Jesus did not say, “You didn’t do enough stuff for Me.” He said, “You never knew Me.”
- You never understood my grace... never knew how I felt about you...
- This is not about going out and doing a bunch more stuff for God. That’s how some of you are going to hear that today... the foundation of Christianity is knowing what He’s done for you and how He feels about.
- Question: Have you ever done that? Have you ever received the warmth of God’s love for you personally? Have you ever heard His voice in your soul saying, “*You*. You are my child. I died for *you*. I have accepted you.”
- Christianity begins not with a bunch of stuff you go and do for God, but receiving what He’s done for you. It starts not with doing stuff for Jesus, but knowing Jesus, and knowing how He feels about you and what He’s done for you.
- You see, when you understand that, and believe it, and cherish it, you’ll start to obey, naturally.

2. Saul did not know how to repent

- Saul looked like he repented; said he was sorry; wept; he did religious things; but he never really repented. He just went through the motions...
 - Here’s the tragic part. He probably thought he had repented. He’s almost surprised throughout his life that God is not paying attention to him. He was self-deceived.
- This should scare you, or wake you up at least: Saul went through the motions of repentance—confession, prayer,

religious activity—but he never dealt with the real issues... he didn't trust God enough to fully surrender, and He didn't value God enough to be satisfied in Him.

- He didn't know how to repent. Here's the question. Do you know how to repent?

5 signs you are not repenting:

- **Rationalizations and blame-shifting** Yeah, I'm not doing what's right but...
 - **you don't understand the hand I've been dealt. I haven't gotten the money** I thought I'd get and life is hard so I can't obey and tithe...
 - **...my rough life justifies my selfishness.**
 - **My marriage is really bad and that justifies my bad attitude.**
 - I'm not really active in the church or serving God but I'm really busy... or I don't know enough about Christianity yet...
- **Unchanged behavior**
 - **Real repentance is not shown in an emotional catharsis, but in a changed life.** Your mouth says you believe in Jesus... but what does your life show? The card in the front of your Bible says you believe in Jesus... what does your life show? Your baptism...
 - The most sure way to see whether you have repented is to look at your life. No change, no Jesus!
- **The absence of godly sorrow**
 - Look at what the Apostle Paul says in **2 Corinthians 7:10**, "**For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.**"
 - Paul talks about a sorrow that is not of God. It cries over its sin, but it's not repentance and does not lead to salvation.

- I've seen this all my life...
 - EXAMPLES...
 - Worldly sorry arises for all kinds of reasons. The sorrow of being caught. Guilt. Shame. Self-pity. That's not repentance toward God.
- **Confession is not repentance.** Just because you confess your sins doesn't mean you've repented of them. You may have just been getting something off your chest. Godly sorrow is sorrow about what your sin has done to God, how wicked it was, and a change of behavior. Godly sorrow results in a change of attitude toward God, and a permanent change of life.
- **Don't measure godly sorrow by the strength of the emotion, but by the effect of the change.**
- **Conditional obedience**
 - God, I'll do this... if you'll do this. I'll obey you, as long as you give this to me, or don't send me there.
- **Partial compliance**
 - You start obeying God in one area but not all. "I'll start tithing but not obeying you in my relationships." "I'll go to church but I'm not going to obey your call on my life."
 - Let's say that there was a man who was an adulterer. He had multiple affairs, a different one on every day of the week. His wife confronts him and says, "OK... I'll quit sleeping with Tuesday girl and Friday girl but Thursday girl and I are going to keep going for a while." That's not repentance.
 - Sometimes people ask me... Why do you always use adultery? It offends my Victorian sensibilities. There are 2 relationships where we should understand exclusivity... 1 is Lordship (problem is Americans don't get that because they don't want be subjected

absolutely to anybody.) So the other relationship that we understand exclusivity in is in romantic love. We get that in love you're either fully given to someone or you're not.

- A man can't be "mostly faithful" to his wife. She's either the only 1 or she's not.
 - So that's why I use that to illustrate the absurdity of saying you are mostly surrendered to Jesus. Lordship is either total or it's nothing. He's either Lord of all or not Lord at all.
- All sin, no matter how small, is absolute rejection of His Lordship.

Saul did not know how to repent. Do you? Write this down.

- **Repentance is full trust in God and complete satisfaction with God that leads to unconditional surrender to God**

Last lesson of Saul: 3. Saul died the sinner's death

- He died every sinner's death:
 - He was hung up in shame on a wall; forsaken by God.
 - The Philistines mocked God at his death because it looked like they had conquered God's king; God's king was stripped of his armor and hung up for the whole world to see.
- But there is a glimmer of hope through this dark, dark cloud... and that is that there is another king simultaneously being prepared in Israel, silently, in the shadows, and that is David; and ironically, it is only through Saul's death, which was Israel's ultimate shame, that the way was prepared for David, God's chosen king and hope of salvation.
- All of this is teaching you about how God's ultimate King (capital K) would take the throne.
- You see... Jesus would come to the throne the exact same way.

- For Jesus, the part of Saul would be played by us. We all, like Saul, had rejected God's Lordship, refusing to trust Him fully and delight in Him (more than we trusted in and delighted in ourselves). And so we are all condemned to die Saul's death.
- But Jesus, after living a perfect life, would die just like Saul did.
 - He was called the King of the Jews. He was **fastened** to a tree. The enemies of God triumphed at his death; they stripped him of his armor and mocked Him, saying, "God's King? He couldn't even save Himself."
- Jesus died just like Saul did, but it wasn't for His sin and foolishness and rebellion, it was for ours.
- But through that death, salvation came to us all.
- You see, just like it was with Saul, it was only through death that the real salvation could come.
- The resurrection of Jesus was like David's ascent to the throne. At the resurrection, Jesus was crowned King of the Universe and offered salvation to us all... but the only way that could work was by Jesus dying the sinner's death, Saul's death, for us.
- For David to take the throne, which was God's hope for Israel, Saul had to die. For Jesus to take the throne, who was God's ultimate salvation for all of us, He first had to die Saul's death for us.

I read an article this week by a Rabbi explaining why Jews don't believe Jesus was the Messiah... He said, "Well, the primary promise was that the Messiah would end all wars and bring peace on earth." He said, "Those are the most important prophecies." So when you Christians point out to them that Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies – that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, to a virgin, betrayed for 30 pieces of silver," he says, "That's interesting... But the most important prophecies about the Messiah is that he will bring peace on earth." Interestingly, I heard Bart Ehrman say the same thing in a

debate. Someone asked, "What would convince you that Jesus was really who He said He would?" He said, "Had he brought the peace on earth He promised."

What both the Rabbi and Dr. Ehrman don't understand is that the real problem in the world is not the Philistines, it's not just famine or poverty or nuclear weapons... listen... the real problem in the world is the heart of Saul in each one of us. Jesus had to come and put away the spirit of Saul that is in each one of us, otherwise there would never be peace on earth, no matter how good the government was or how ample the provisions were.

What Dr. Ehrman and the Rabbi want is another Saul. But God cannot build his kingdom and fill it with a bunch of people, like Saul, who don't want God to be King. Jesus could only bring the Kingdom to earth by creating a race of people that have peace in here because they have peace with God.

Jesus put away the Saul in us by dying Saul's death for us, our death. When we receive His death for us, that gives us peace with God, which give us the hearts of the Kingdom. We have peace, first with God then with each other and even with ourselves and our stuff.

Love replaces jealousy; contentment and generosity replace selfishness.

Before the world could be saved, you and I had to be saved. Before Jesus can solve the problems out there, He has to solve the problems in here. Before David can sit on the throne, Saul has to die.

Listen, Jesus will come literally and reign on earth, like David did... and He will bring the peace and prosperity we've always been hoping for, but first he has to end the rebellious, Saul-like spirit in us.

Have you received His peace in your heart? He's died your death and paid your price and offered it as a gift to all who will receive it. Come

home to God; repent, and receive His salvation. It's a gift for all who will believe and receive.

CONCLUSION:

Do you realize the tragedy of dying like Saul?

Do you realize how easy it is? To be in church but just never have trusted God and surrendered to him? Have you ever done that?

You come to that final place in life... look back and see good thing you'd done, but then enter eternity without God?

Bullpen:

- **Breakdown with God/self/others**
- **We often blame others when it is God we are upset with**

Many of us, our lives are going to be the same way. So much that God wanted to do through us... but didn't. Couldn't, because we wouldn't let him.

This is how David, Israel's hope and great king, came to a throne. What do you think was being taught?

- Saul was crushed for his sin, fastened to a wall for his rebellion; Jesus was crushed for our sin, fastened to a tree for our rebellion
- Saul's death put on display the foolishness of man; Jesus' death put on display our foolishness but God's great wisdom
- Saul's death paved the way for David's rise; Saul's death allowed the coming of Israel's hope and salvation. Jesus' death paved the way for our rise; His death allowed the coming of our hope and salvation.
- Saul's death ended an era of dissatisfaction and failure; Jesus ended our personal dissatisfaction and failure. He gave us life, and life to the fullest.
- We all deserved Saul's death; Jesus died it for us.

Real repentance is full surrender to God because you have full satisfaction in God. The only way you can have full satisfaction in God is to believe that He is fully your possession. All of our spiritual problems come from 2 sources... not believing that God fully accepts

us, not valuing that enough. The 2 root sins that plague the human heart: 1. works righteousness (the idea that we can make ourselves good enough for God—we can't, God had to do it, and He did it by accomplishing salvation for us in Christ and absorbing into Himself everything that was offensive about us); 2. Idolatry; not valuing God and God's approval enough.

- You see, when Saul rebelled from God and took matters into his own hands, he broke his relationship with 3 things:
 - God
 - Other people—lost some of his best relationships... to Samuel, his spiritual father, to David, one of his most loyal servants, and even to Jonathan, his son. (churches have all kinds of nasty fights in them)
 - Then thirdly, he lost his relationship himself—his heart was eaten up with fear, insecurity and jealousy.

This cycle of deterioration always happens when you are separated from God.