

Difficult Texts In The Bible

Evil Spirits Sent By God? (I Sa 16:14-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on the "Difficult Texts In The Bible."
 - a. We have looked at a great number of these lessons.
 - b. Today we are going to look at **I Sa 16:14-15** and ask the question "does God send evil spirits to people?"

I. Conflicts Concerning The Passage

- A. First major difficulty is...
 1. "reconciling the perfect holiness of God with his action in sending an evil spirit upon Saul." (Forth Worth Lectureship 1982; Difficult Texts Of The Bible Old Testament "Difficult Texts From Ruth, 1 And 2 Samuel" by Baird, James pg. 270)
 - i. **Is 5:16** "But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, And God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness."¹
 - ii. **I Pt 1:16** "because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy.""
- B. Second major difficulty is...
 1. "in regard to the nature of the evil spirit which Saul received." (Ibid)
 - i. Was it demonic, or a mental/physical illness?
 - a. **Ac 19:15** "And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?""
 - b. **Mt 4:24** "Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them."

II. The Context Of The Passage

- A. I & II Samuel cover...
 1. The life of Samuel, God's prophet.
 2. The life of two men anointed king by Samuel, Saul & David.
 3. The courageous righteous acts of Saul and his departure from walking with God.
- B. The departure from God is where we find ourselves tonight
 1. Saul in **I Sa 15** goes to battle with Amalekites.
 2. In **I Sa 15:19** Samuel asks Saul a question...
 - i. "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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3. Notice Saul's reply to Samuel in **I Sa 15:20-21**.
 - i. "And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.""
 4. It was this answer that had the Lord through Samuel say this in **I Sa 15:23, 26**.
 - i. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king...26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.""
- C. Thus Saul is removed
1. Saul was allowed to continue to rein. He did for many more years.
 2. However Saul was no longer he whom the line of kings would continue.
 - i. Remember that once there was a king his son would become the next king. In this case God removed that opportunity giving it to David.

III. The False Conclusions Concerning The Passage

- A. The "at that time" philosophy
1. Concerning God sending an evil spirit to someone those of the "at that time" philosophy teach that this language is based off of an assumption back then that we now know cannot happen.
 - i. In other words, the people back then didn't know this wasn't possible, and thus it was "right" at that time to think so but now we know better.
 2. Now on its face we know this is simply sin and wrong. However we can easily make the same mistake if we are not careful.
 - i. For example: I've heard people say that God allowed women to be treated as "second class" in the O.T. times because it was the custom and normal thought of the day but now-a-days we know better.
 - ii. This couldn't be further from the truth. Women have always been taken care of by God just as much as men. He gave them the same "roles" He gives women now.
 - iii. Man is the one that made woman second class. Look at faithful families, women were respected. Sarah, Debra, Eve, Ruth, Ester...
 3. This philosophy is wrong for three reasons.
 - i. First God doesn't base right and wrong on the custom of the day.
 - a. **He 13:8** "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."
 - b. **Is 46:10** Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'"
 - c. Though laws or covenants changed God and His will do not.

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- ii. Second this philosophy violates fundamental hermeneutics.
 - a. That is that a scripture should be taken literal unless there is something in the context and/or text itself that deems it should be figurative.
- iii. Third this philosophy is wrong because it makes God untrustworthy.
 - a. If the Bible is manmade and fallible than we have no reason to follow it.
 - b. It is not manmade however.
 - 1. **II Ti 3:16-17** "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."
 - c. It is also trustworthy.
 - 1. **Jn 8:32** "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2. **Jn 17:17** "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."
 - 3. **I Jn 5:13** "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."

IV. The Conclusions Worthy Of Consideration Concerning The Passage

- A. We must understand God's power verse His will
 - 1. God's power is all encompassing.
 - i. **Gn 17:1** "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless."
 - a. El Shaddai means God Almighty
 - ii. **Rv 19:6** "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunders, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"
 - 2. God's will is all motivating.
 - i. **II Ti 2:13** "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."
 - 3. Thus just because God is all powerful ie Almighty doesn't mean He can go beyond His will.
 - i. For example: God has the power to send Satan to hell but His will prevents this from happening. In other words it's not His will to do so yet.

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- B. We must understand that good and evil beings exist
 - 1. Angels and demons exist. God and Satan exist. Thus good and evil exists.
 - i. **Ps 91:11** "For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways."
 - ii. **Ja 2:19** "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!"
- C. We must understand that God can use evil to bring about His will
 - 1. We see many examples of this.
 - i. **Ex 10:1** "Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him"
 - ii. **I Ch 21:1** "Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel."
 - a. **II Sa 24:1** "Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah.""
 - iii. **Je 27:6** "And now I have given all these lands into the hand of **Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant**; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him." (emphasis mine)
- D. Bringing it all together
 - 1. There is nothing to indicate that it was anything other than what it says it was...an evil spirit sent by God to Saul.
 - i. This doesn't violate God's power or will, nor does it violate His Mosaic Law.
 - 2. It appears to be that which was used to bring about God's will in showing that David truly was a man after God's own heart.
 - i. **I Sa 13:14** "But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

CONCLUSION

- 1. I hope you have been encouraged by this lesson and uplifted. I hope I have helped to bring some, if only a little, insight into these great verses.
- 2. Invitation²
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**

² Brother James O. Baird's sermon outline "Difficult Texts From Ruth, 1 And Second Samuel" was of utmost benefit.