

BIBLICALLY SPEAKING: Channeling

You Can't Have It Both Ways

Growing up I was inspired by the no nonsense of Jack Webb, of Dragnet, Howard Cosell, Walter Cronkite, Martin Luther King Jr, the Old Testament Prophets, Jesus and a host of others. I have been described by church officials as “a diamond in the rough.” In other words, I am unfiltered, not refined, not modified, a shoot from the hip’s kind of guy. About all I can say is what Tom Selleck said in his movie, Crossfire Trail, “it’s a gift.”

For years I attended parties and other gatherings where the fun thing to do was playing Tarot Cards and Ouija boards. Yesterday’s games have now turned into big business. Since 2005, there has been an increase of 53% of people contacting mystical services like psychics and palm readers. Covid and rising interest rates and war have only increased the popularity of psychics.

Pew research estimates that 15% of Americans are into psychic channeling and over 40% say they have used their services. Last year 2.2 billion dollars with a B was spent on this service. Women are twice as much likely to use their services.

When fear and doubt enter our minds, we drift about like a dinghy on the ocean. We are no longer playing games; I feel we have taken our ability to trust God and our own common sense and handed it over to people who know how to use us when we are the most vulnerable.

Out of guilt, concern or the inability to make a decision, seers are sought out to steady the rough waters they are in.

Today at the hospital I was having a typical heavy conversation where I was talking to the nurse about her family, wanting to retire but health

insurance is needed, the reason they bought the farm where they are presently living and, you guessed it, channeling.

She recounted how she still regrets not being present when her mother died. She was seriously thinking about hiring a person to be a channel to her dead mother to see how she felt about her daughter not being present at the scene of her death.

Her eyes were getting misty, and I felt her pain. I told her to save her money and listen to me. This was only the second time I met this woman, but I saw her as a concerned, caring, sensitive person. I shared my story how I forgot to kiss my mother good-bye as I hurried to catch the school bus in my sophomore year in high school. Mom died several hours later while I was sitting in my English class.

I then boldly said, "I believe your mother is in a place surrounded by love and in her dying moments she felt the love you had always shared with her and she was happy with you." The nurse became teary-eyed and thanked me.

LET'S GET BIBLICAL:

Samuel I and II were originally one book. The Authorship of Samuel is very complicated. Several of the events were discussed twice, each with a different emphasis. Several of the miracles in the book are seen by many scholars as being mythical. Throughout the book Israel is in a constant crisis. The text I will be discussing is thought to have been better placed a few chapters later.

There are about a dozen texts about using seers and channeling the dead in the Bible. One could choose from Leviticus 19:31, 20:6 and 27. 1 Chronicles 10:13-14, 11 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 8:19, Deuteronomy 18:9-12, Mark 1:23-26, Acts 16:16-19 or Revelation 12:7-9. Being the brute for punishment that I am I chose 1 Samuel 28:6-25.

The Biblical scholars I'll be using are George Caird, John Schroeder; Walter Brueggemann, Tony Cartledge, notes from seminary and of course, Dennis Siebert.

BACKGROUND:

Samuel had recently died. Samuel's mother was Hannah. Hannah was barren for some time, so her husband married a second time, and she had a slew of kids. Eventually Hannah had a son and named him Samuel. He was a man of many roles; spiritual leader, a prophet and an occultist. All the countries in the area had kings and the people were shouting, "We want a king." So, Samuel, against his will, appointed Saul to be the king. Saul reigned as king from 1020 BCE until 1000 BCE. Saul is a story of a young farmer who sets out to find his father's ass and instead he found a kingdom.

Saul was a charismatic hero who was a poor organizer and spent most of his time as king worrying about David and spent the rest of his time at war with the neighbors.

THE TEXT: I Samuel 28:6-25 please read the text

Samuel had been dead a number of years. As king, Saul expelled the mediums and the wizards from the land. Saul was a poor organizer and he did not understand Israel's faith. Now the king is being threatened, having no sound faith and feeling depressed he asks God for help.

Ignoring the prophet Samuel and his faith, God shows "hard love," and refuses to help the king Saul. Saul becomes a desperate man. He has no future, only a past. Since his approved religion fails him, he's off and running for any quack around. As Brueggemann wrote, "his decision to seek help from a medium is a measure of his moral exhaustion."

This pathetic tale is that Saul has so lost touch with God and had come to such a panic that he was prepared to resort to a practice he had

previously condemned in his better moments. Saul appears as a hollow man plagued by insecurities and ravaged by doubts.

Saul puts on a disguise and visits a medium at night showing he is no real king, that he is frantic, a man with no resources. He asks the medium to bring back Samuel and all he gets is one angry man. Samuel is angry for being called back and Samuel's speech allows no appeal, no protest, no argument, no alternative.

Saul receives his "last supper" and he dies the next day. Wow, what a story. Samuel, the voice of old tradition and God will not be mocked dominates the story, not the king and not the woman.

From time to time, we all get plagued by doubts and insecurity. My take is that I need to hear and to listen to the sounds of God that are all around me. Besides hearing and listening to the sounds of God, I need to obey. Too often we look for God in the wrong places when we get hooked on to "psychic hotlines," and clairvoyants who claim to "channel" the voices of the dead.

I do not see "channeling" as a sin, but I do see it as not completely trusting in a God of mercy and forgiveness and trusting in your own common sense. Unlike the mystics, I do not offer you answers you may want to hear. I suggest you save your money and give it to the homeless. May we all heed the One true voice. Leave the dead at peace, work faithfully in the NOW, trusting God and yourself. I am able to trust death, I invite you all to do the same.

Keep the faith,

Dennis Siebert

P.S. Yes, I have done my homework. For years I have studied channeling. It was just the last four weeks I took a much deeper look into the world of psychic mediums.

BRIEF LIST:

Bought the book, The Art of Channeling by Jenny Tyson \$18.99

Listened to several tapes by Tom Kenyon and Teal Swan

Spent time listening to Anita Moorjani pleasant speaker

Read a book by Eckhart and heard many of his lectures

Talks by Tyler Henry

Spent time listening to Pagans Witch Corner

Michael Sandler The Shift Network

I even took a free introduction course on channeling. Following the brief course for \$244 and listening in on seven sessions I could be registered as a psychic.

Many of us are always looking for a ready and automatic solution to our fears. Knowledge of forgiveness and hope keeps me alive in the now. Let the dead lie in peace, they have no desire to speak with us. They are in a more perfect place.