

# The Awful Void

by George Kulp

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*The sermon warns of the consequences of spiritual suicide, where one has severed themselves from God and is eternally doomed.*

**Scripture:** Joshua 24:15, 1 Samuel 15:22, 1 Samuel 28:15, Proverbs 29:1, Hosea 4:17, Matthew 18:4, Luke 9:62, Ephesians 4:30, Hebrews 6:4, Hebrews 10:26

**Topics:** "Spiritual Obedience", "Eternal Consequences"

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## Description

George Kulp delivers a powerful sermon on the consequences of spiritual suicide, using the story of King Saul as a cautionary tale. Saul, once anointed by God and filled with the Spirit, disobeyed repeatedly until God departed from him, leaving him in eternal damnation. Kulp urges the congregation to reflect on their own spiritual state, emphasizing the importance of humility, obedience, and a living relationship with God to avoid a similar fate.

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## Transcript

"God is departed from me, and answereth me not."

I Sam. 28:15

Some years ago I officiated at the funeral of a man who committed suicide. He took a rope about three feet long, deliberately attached it to a rafter overhead, kicked a block away from beneath his feet, and thus put out the spark of life -- sent himself into eternity. Surely the man is insane who would thus send himself into the presence of God. We have nought but pity for him. But here in our text we have before us a spiritual suicide. A man who once had life, who once was yoked up with God, who once was a branch of the true Vine, but there came a time when he severed himself from God, crossed the line, and was eternally doomed. I want you to consider him and take warning. Watch carefully and ask yourself if he is anything like you. As Sodom and Gomorrah were examples, as we are commanded to remember Lot's wife, here is an awful example of repeated disobedience, until God would no longer hear nor answer this man, and he was constrained to say: "The Lord hath departed from me and answereth me not."

First: This man once had spiritual life; once he abode in the truth, walked in the light, had a good experience, was a member of the Church, and chosen of God to be Israel's king. He was anointed by Divine direction, the oil had been poured upon him, God gave him another heart, he was a new man and he had new company, "there went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched." More than

that, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied -- got so full he boiled over, and other people knew he had the Spirit and heard him, so that they said: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Brother, can you see your own picture here Were you a church member? Were you born again? a new creature? with a new heart? You testified? had good company? But all this in the past tense?

There were evidences that he was a good man. He was humble. Humility is one of the Christian graces. Jesus said: "Except ye be converted and become as little children (not childish, but childlike) ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of. Heaven." Augustine was asked, "Which is the first of the Christian graces?" and he answered, "Humility." "Which is the second?" and again he said, "Humility." "Which is the third?" and still he replied, "Humility."

This man was humble. When they sought him to make him king, he avoided the responsibility, did not seek it, "hid himself among the stuff" -- and yet he was a man of real merit. Samuel, pointing to him, said: "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen? There is none like him among all the people." "He that abaseth himself shall be exalted." If you want to go up, you must first go down. Jesus said: "I am among you as one that serveth." "He that would be great among you let him be your minister," your servant. Brother, have you this grace, this evidence of your sonship? -- or is it, too, in the past tense -- you HAD it?

This man was magnanimous. When he was appointed king there were some sons of Belial and they despised him and brought him no presents. But when the time of trial, the day of battle, came, and this man Saul led them out to battle, and behaved kingly, winning the victory ... then the people said: "Who is he that said, Shall Saul not reign over us? Bring him here that we may put him to death, but Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day, for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."

He worshipped and praised God. The inspired writer, by direction of the Holy Ghost, says: "They worshipped the Lord, they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord, and they rejoiced greatly." This reminds one of the disciples who were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

He once surely had an experience, a knowledge of God, and walked in His ways. Yet here we have this man, this member of the church, saying: "God hath departed from me and answereth me not." Oh, how many church members who never hear from Heaven! Only this morning in the service a young matron stood up and said: "I have been in the church since my childhood, but I have been deceived, I never knew God; was never converted." Church membership can never take the place of a living experience. "We do know that we know Him" is the privilege of every child of God.

Let us now inquire why God left him? God never leaves until He has to. There is a reason. The Word reveals it. This man repeatedly disobeyed God. He spared the cattle of the Amalekites and Agag their king, failing to learn the lesson, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

When God moved out an evil spirit moved in. It has been said that Nature abhors a vacuum. God will fill a heart when it is prepared for His presence, but when He goes out, the devil comes in.

God moved out never to return. For twenty-three years this man was doomed -- the glow of health on his cheek, the light of life in his eye, the blood coursing through his veins, and yet left, forsaken of God! God would not answer him. He had prayed, but got no response; had consulted Urim and Thummim, but no intimation that God cared. All communication with Heaven was absolutely cut off.

Abraham could wait on God until the fire moved between the divided sacrifice, and the answer came; but no answer for this man. Jacob could lie at the foot of the oak and, in his vision, see angels ascending and descending, and awakening could say, "Surely God is in this place;" but no vision for this man. Gideon could put out his fleece as he prayed, and again could test God in the audacity of faith; but no tests induce Heaven to answer this man from whom God has departed. Israel, as the priest consults Urim and Thummim, could know God's will and be divinely guided; but no guidance for this man, because, not owing to one act of disobedience, but many, he came to the line, crossed it and fixed by his own act his eternal destiny.

God gives to every man the power to choose, and the opportunity to decide, here and NOW. Man can choose all the will of God and delight himself in it, and it is a fact that man does as he pleases -- he chooses deliberately between good and evil. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are." "I set before you life and death, good and evil, choose ye." "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." "If any man WILL, let him come unto Me." "Whosoever WILL, let him come" -- and many other passages from the Word prove that. man makes his own choice; he is a free moral agent fixing his own destiny.

Man can reject God so often that He departs from him forever. This man lived, moved, acted, thought, purposed, and yet, for twenty-three years, was doomed and damned.

"An exceptional case," you say? Nay, look at these pictures. "O Ephraim, Ephraim, how can I give thee up?" is the cry of God over one who stoned prophets and rejected messages, until the lament ceased and the awful words went forth: "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." Israel "In their hearts turned back into Egypt, then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of Heaven." "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be cut off, and that without remedy."

When God departs, man has no longer a Savior. The law of God may be preached, its thunders roll until others shrink under its denunciations, but he remains unmoved. Jesus died and, breaking the bars of the tomb, ascended up on high where He ever liveth to make intercession, but not for the man whom God has left. God gave him up, and there is no need to plead for such as he. He has rejected so often that there remains no more sacrifice for sin -- The Holy Ghost leaves him. The Spirit is called away forever. When He came, His office work was to convince of sin, righteousness and judgment, but this man who is given up of God resisted, grieved and insulted Him so often that there is no more conviction. Hardening his heart, and Pharaoh-like, saying again and again, "tomorrow," at last the Spirit of God took His everlasting flight. How many are grieving the Holy Ghost today, saying: "At a more convenient season I will call for thee go thy way." How many, owing to repeated acts of disobedience, need to pray: "Stay; thou insulted Spirit, stay, nor take thine everlasting flight."

Angels leave such an one. When God leaves they fly away. Once the angel of the Lord encamped around about him, guardian angels attended his footsteps, ministering spirits watched over him, but now even fallen angels pay less attention to him than once they did, they know his doom is sealed, his damnation sure. Church bells ringing out their Gospel invitation, have none for him. "Come, sinners, to the Gospel feast: Let every soul be Jesus' guest," has no meaning for him. By his repeated acts of disobedience, he compelled God to depart. The pulpit may sound forth its solemn warnings, its exhortations and admonitions, but the seed falls on stony ground -- only to perish. Prayers may ascend for the lost until sinners around may yield and cry for mercy, until the heavens bend and God answers, but no prayers avail for him. Penitents may weep around him -- aye, by his very side -- but he is callused by mercies

rejected and sheds not a tear. Converts rejoice and their rejoicings arouse sympathy in many hearts, but none in his. Joy has departed from him forever. Such a man has no sorrow for sin. Sinai, with all its terrors and thunderous denunciations of sin. may rock and roll beneath the presence of God, but he moves on indifferent and unmoved. The Cross of Christ, with arms outstretched, may plead for sinners to return; the blood of the Crucified One in the sinner's way may stop him in his mad career, but this man, forsaken of God, moves on, trampling the blood under his feet, toward a devil's Hell. Men called of God, with an unction from the Holy One, may proclaim the Gospel until penitents crowd mourner's benches, but he is not among them. He is a derelict on the ocean of time. He is like yonder hull lying in the way of ocean liners, forsaken and doomed -- driven from ocean to stream, from stream to ocean, from Arctic waters to Tropic seas; at the mercy of every wind and storm that arises, until some mighty thunderbolt from the skies strikes it and hurls it to the depths below.

So on goes this forsaken man, given up of God and angels day after day, until the justice of God smites him and Hell, moving to meet him at his coming, opens wide her portals and he enters "his own place." Doomed by his own acts. Overriding God and Calvary and Law and the Gospel and everything that God and redeemed men could do to save him, Hell is his portion, as the inevitable consequence of his own choice.

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