

A Study of I Samuel

The Desiring for a King

The Call and Anointing of Saul

Chapter 9

Saul and Samuel Unite (9:1-27): Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin from the town of Gibeah (1 cf. 10:26). The kings switching from Benjamin to Judah following the removal of Saul (Gen. 49:10).

Saul was “choice young man and a goodly” and tall in stature (2). Man is always choosing according to the outward appearance of things, thus Saul will be the peoples choice, but David will be the Lord’s choice: “But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

Saul is sent to look for his father’s asses which bring him to the region Zuph the hill country of Ephraim the home of Samuel (5 cf. 1:1). As the search for the asses lingers (5), Saul’s servant suggests consulting a seer (6-10). In Saul’s day a prophet was primarily known as a seer and would do such basic tasks as finding cattle. As time went on however their roll of a prophet, one who proclaimed the word of God would be their primary function.

Saul and his servant come across Samuel (11-14). The meeting of Saul and Samuel was no happenstance. For Samuel was told by God “tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel.” (16).

Samuel meets with Saul and lets him know that not only are his father’s asses found but that he was God’s choice for being king (20). Saul in humble response says, “...Am I not a Benjamite of the smallest of the tribes of Israel?” and my families of the tribes of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou to me?” (21 cf. I Sam. 15:17).

Samuel invites Saul and his servant to be their guest of honor at the sacrificial feast (22-24).

The next day Samuel calls Saul to come commune with him in the early morning (25-26). As they were departing Samuel asks Saul to send his servant ahead so he can show Saul the word of God (27).

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The Anointing of Saul (10:1-27): As Samuel prepares Saul for the revealing of God's purpose, Samuel first anoints him with oil (1). In the Old Testament the anointing of oil symbolized the setting a part of a person or even an object, for divine service (Ex. 30:23-33).

Samuel gives Saul 3 signs that would confirm the divine nature of his call to kingship:

1. Saul would meet two men near Rachael's tomb who would tell him the whereabouts of the lost asses (2).
2. Saul would meet 3 men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying 3 kids, one carrying 3 loafs and one carrying a bottle of wine (3-4).
3. Saul would meet a procession of prophets descending form the high place at Gibeah (5-7).

Samuel assures Saul when these signs come to pass that God is with him (7).

Following these 3 signs Saul was to go down to Gilgal and wait for Samuel 7 days at which time Samuel will offer sacrifice and show Saul what he is to do (8).

All the signs spoken by Samuel came to pass that day and God gave Saul another heart so that when the prophets came from the hill, Saul joined them and did prophesied among them. The transformation of Saul was so dramatic and unexpected that from this time forward a proverb was created, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (9-13).

Saul told his uncle finding the asses but not about the issue surrounding his kingship (14-16).

Sometime later Samuel gathers the leaders of Israel together at Mizpah (17). Through a process of elimination, the son of Kish is chosen but is nowhere to be found (18-21).

Saul's humility is once again on display here as he "hid himself among the stuff" (22). The will of the people and the determinate council of God prevails, and Saul is presented and received as king (23-25).

Samuel writes in a book the constitution for a theocratic kingdom. This constitution has never been located; however, it would most likely contain things pertaining to right rulership such as Deuteronomy 17:14-17 (25).

Saul upon leaving to his hometown Gibeah, is sent with a band of men whose hearts God had touched (26). This would be the start of his royal cabinet.

Opposition to Saul's leadership starts early on. They are the children of Belial. They withheld their presents the response of which Saul "held his peace" (27). Once Saul wins his first battle the people will seek their death for opposing Saul as king but their bloodlust is stopped by Saul (11:12-13).

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The First Battle of Saul (11:1-15): No sooner had Saul begun his rule when the Ammonites came against the people of Jabeshgilead. The Ammonites are related to Israel through lot (Gen. 19:38). The men of Jabesh asked for a covenant, or a treaty of Nahash the Ammonite and in so doing they would be servants unto them (1). However, Nahash would only agree on the terms that the men of Jabesh would agree to have their right eye thrust out (2). The viciousness of the Ammonites is attested to by Amos in 1:13. The removal of the right eye was intended to disable a man for war, since his left eye was usually covered by his shield. Similarly, the amputation of a man's thumbs and great toes (Judges 1:7 & 8) was designed to incapacitate him from the use of the bow and to destroy his swiftness of foot.

Amazingly the men of Jabesh ask for a 7 day respite that they might see if there be a man to save them or not (3).

Saul gets wind of the plight of the people of Jabesh and when he does the spirit of God came upon him and his anger was kindled greatly (4).

Saul is moved into action against the Ammonites and Nahash their leader. Saul in order to motivate the people into defending the people of Jabesh cuts up an yoke of oxen and sends them to the tribes with a messenger saying, "Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." (7 also see Judges 19:27-30).

Saul's tactics definitely got the attention of the people, for 300,000 men of Israel and 30,000 from Judah came out to Bezek and said unto the messengers that they would be their to help by the following day by the time the sun be hot (8-10).

Saul does a surprise attack, by a forced march through the night arriving early in the morning (the morning watch was the last third of the night) engaged the Ammonites in battle and slaughtered them (11).

This decisive victory is what will lead the men of Jabeshgilead to take down the body of Saul from outside the wall of Bethshan (see I Sam. 31:11-13).

Following this victory, the people desire to kill all those who apposed Saul, the men of Belial mentioned in 10:27. Saul however, refrained the people (12-13).

Saul is now hailed as a hero and becomes firmly entrenched in his role as king. Saul and Samuel and the people go up to Gilgal and offer sacrifices before the Lord, and all the people rejoiced greatly! (14-15).

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The Words of Samuel (12:1-25): Samuel will do several things in his speech to the nation. First, he will remind them of his faithfulness as a judge and prophet of God (1-5). Secondly, he reminds them that it is not any king or ruler or judge that delivers them, but it is their obedience and faithfulness to the LORD that assures their blessing (6-15). Notice the wording, “It is the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt” (6). Thirdly, Samuel calls for rain during harvest season as a sign from God for their wickedness in asking for a king (16-19). Lastly, Samuel underscores their obedience and faithfulness to the LORD is what blesses the nation, if they do obey and are faithful to the LORD , blessings; if they do wickedly they “shall be consumed both ye and your king” (20-25).