

1 Samuel 09 - Samuel Anoints Saul as King

III. Samuel and Saul narrative (8:1—15:35)

(2) God chooses Saul to be the king (9:1—10:16)

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1 Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was **Kish** the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, son of a Benjamite, a valiant mighty man.

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1 There was a man from Benjamin named Kish, Abiel's son, the grandson of Zeror and great-grandson of Aphiah's son Becorath. A prominent man from Benjamin,

1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

- "...Kish" - "my Father is El"; he was a wealthy landowner who led in times of war

— Saul was a member of the ruling class, though from a small clan in a small tribe

2 He had a son whose name was **Saul**, a young and handsome *man*, and there was not a more handsome man than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.

2 He had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome *man*, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.

2 he had a son named Saul, who was a choice and handsome young man. There was no one among the Israelis as handsome as he, and he was a head taller than any of the other people.

2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

- "...Saul" - "asked for [of God]" (Cf. 8:10); at this time, he would have been in his late 20s (Cf. 13:1)

- Saul also occurs as the name:

(1) Of an Edomite prince (Gen 36:37-38)

(2) Of a son of Simeon (Gen 46:10)

(3) Of a Kohathite Levite (1 Chr 6:24)

(4) In the NT, of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 7:58), also a man of Benjamin

- He was a tall and striking Benjamite who appeared quite naive and unkingly in many ways. He hailed from the town of Gibeah (10:26), where the concubine of a Levite who had sought hospitality was raped and killed (Judges 19). Excavations at Tel el-Ful, just three miles north of Jerusalem, have established it as the site of ancient Gibeah.

— Like many choices made today, the people primarily focused on Saul's physical appearance

3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, had wandered off. So Kish said to his son Saul, "Now take with you one of the servants and arise, go search for the donkeys."

3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to his son Saul, "Take now with you one of the servants, and arise, go search for the donkeys."

3 The donkeys belonging to Kish, Saul's father, were lost, and Kish told his son Saul, "Take one of the young men with you, get up, and go look for the donkeys."

3 And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

Saul is out looking for the asses of his father, and the asses of Israel are looking for a king.
[J.V. McGee]

4 So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find *them*. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not *there*. Then he passed through the land of the Benjaminites, but they did not find *them*.

4 He passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find *them*. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, but *they were* not *there*. Then he passed through the land of the Benjaminites, but they did not find *them*.

4 He went through the hill country of Ephraim and through the region of Shalishah, but they did not find them. Then they went through the region of Shaalim, but they were not there. They also went through the territory of the descendants of Benjamin, but they did not find them.

4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjaminites, but they found them not.

5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let's return, or else my father will stop *being concerned* about the donkeys and will become anxious about us."

5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let us return, or else my father will cease *to be concerned* about the donkeys and will become anxious for us."

5 When they entered the region of Zuph, Saul told the young man with him, "Come on, let's go back so my father does not stop worrying about the donkeys and become anxious about us."

5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.

- On the mission to find some lost donkeys belonging to his father, Saul approached the region of Zuph (in the hill country of Ephraim, the home of Samuel)

6 But he said to him, "Behold now, *there is* a man of God in this city, and the man is held in honor; everything that he says definitely comes *true*. Now let's go there, perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out."

6 He said to him, "Behold now, there is a man of God in this city, and the man is held in honor; all that he says surely comes true. Now let us go there, perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out."

6 The young man said, "Look, there's a man of God in this town. The man is respected, and everything he predicts happens. Now, let's go there. Perhaps he can tell us about the journey on which we have set out."

6 And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

- It occurred to Saul's servant that since Samuel was a seer, he could help find the animals (the possibility of asking God for help or guidance never seemed to occur to Saul)

— In Saul's day a prophet was known primarily as a seer (*har' ra'ah*) undoubtedly because the major thrust of his ministry was associated with receiving divine revelation, even in matters as mundane as finding lost animals

— Later prophets served more as proclaimers of revelation, spokesmen for God, though of course all prophets were both seers and proclaimers. Samuel, for example, was expressly described by both terms (9:11; 3:20).

7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But look, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread is gone from our sacks and there is no gift to bring to the man of God. What do we

have?"

7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread is gone from our sack and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"

7 Saul told the young man, "Look, we could go, but what could we bring the man? The bread is gone from our bags, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have with us?"

7 Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?

8 The servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have in my hand a fourth of a shekel of silver; I will give *it* to the man of God and he will tell us our way."

8 The servant answered Saul again and said, "Behold, I have in my hand a fourth of a shekel of silver; I will give *it* to the man of God and he will tell us our way."

8 The young man answered Saul again, "Look here! I have in my hand a quarter shekel of silver. I'll give it to the man of God, and he will tell us about our journey."

8 And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.

9 (Previously in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let's go to the seer"; for *he who is called* a prophet now was previously called a seer.)

9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for *he who is called* a prophet now was formerly called a seer.)

9 (Previously in Israel, a person would say when he went to inquire of God, "Come on! Let's go to the seer!" because the person known as a prophet today was formerly called a seer.)

9 (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

10 Then Saul said to his servant, "Good idea; come, let's go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

10 Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

10 Saul told his young man, "That's a good suggestion! Come on, let's go!" Then they entered the town where the man of God was.

10 Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

11 As they went up the slope to the city, they found young women going out to draw water, and they said to them, "Is the seer here?"

11 As they went up the slope to the city, they found young women going out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

11 As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some young women going out to draw water, and they told them, "Is the seer here?"

11 And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

12 They answered them and said, "He is; see, *he is* ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come into the city today, because the people have a sacrifice on the **highplace** today.

12 They answered them and said, "He is; see, *he is* ahead of you. Hurry now, for he has come into the city today, for the people have a sacrifice on the high place today.

12 They answered them: "Yes, he's right there ahead of you. Hurry, for he came to town just today because there is a sacrifice for the people on the high place today.

12 And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place:

- "...high place" - a hilltop on which the people offered sacrifices; may have been Mizpah ("watchtower, Cf. 7:9)

— These "high places" are mentioned frequently in the OT as places of Canaanite phallic worship (Cf. 1 Kings 12:31; 14:23; 15:14; 22:43). It is noteworthy that during this time, when the Ark was away from the Tabernacle, that these "high places" were used by the Israelites, for sanctioned worship

— The reason for the divine approval of these locales was because there was no official place of worship because the Ark was not in the Tabernacle (Cf. 1 Kings 3:2-3)

— The first time a "high place" was mentioned after the temple was built (as an 'official' place of worship), "high places" are disapproved again (1 Kings 11:7)

13 As soon as you enter the city you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now then, go up, for you will find him about this time."

13 As soon as you enter the city you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up for you will find him at once."

13 When you come into town you can find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people don't eat until he arrives, because he must bless the sacrifice and then after

that those who are invited will eat. So go up right now because you can find him now."

13 As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.

14 So they went up to the city. As they came into the city, behold, Samuel was coming out toward them to go up to the high place.

14 So they went up to the city. As they came into the city, behold, Samuel was coming out toward them to go up to the high place.

14 They went up to the town, and as they were coming to the center of the town, Samuel was coming out to meet them, on his way up to the high place.

14 And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

15 Now a day before Saul's coming, the LORD had revealed *this* to Samuel, saying,

15 Now a day before Saul's coming, the LORD had revealed *this* to Samuel saying,

15 Now one day before Saul's arrival, the LORD had revealed to Samuel:

15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

16 "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him as **ruler** over My people Israel; and he will save My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have considered My people, because their outcry has come to Me."

16 "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over My people Israel; and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me."

16 "About this time tomorrow I'll send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you are to anoint him as Commander-in-Chief over my people Israel. He'll deliver my people from the control of the Philistines, because I've seen the suffering of my people and because their cry has come up to me."

16 To morrow 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, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

- "...ruler" - *negid*, prince, leader, chief, chieftain, official, captain; here it indicates a "king-designate"

- Even though God had broken the Philistines domination at the Battle of Mizpah (7:10-11), they still threatened Israel occasionally, until David finally subdued them

17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall **rule** over My people."

17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people."

17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man I told you about. This man will rule over my people."

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

- "...rule" - *asar*, usually means "restrain"; Saul would not rule as most kings did, but would restrain the people as God's vice-regent

- Though a son of Kish, a man of some influence (v1), Saul had little to commend him to the high position of king except his physical impressiveness (v2). God had to convince both Saul and the people that he was the proper candidate.

- This does not mean that Saul satisfied God's ultimate requirements, only that He was graciously letting the people have their own way

— When the two met (by God's providential control), Samuel not only put Saul's mind at ease concerning the lost beasts, but also told him that he was God's choice for king (v20)

18 Then Saul approached Samuel at the gateway and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is."

18 Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is."

18 As Saul approached Samuel in the middle of the gate, he said, "Please tell me where the seer's house is."

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19 And Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up ahead of me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and in the morning I will let you go, and will tell you everything that is on your mind.

19 Samuel answered Saul and said, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and in the morning I will let you go, and will tell you all that is on your mind.

19 Samuel answered Saul: "I'm the seer. Go up ahead of me to the high place, and eat with me today. In the morning I'll send you away and tell you everything that is on your mind.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

- Saul's overall unawareness is evident in that he didn't know Samuel, who was Israel's leading judge and prophet

20 And as for your donkeys that wandered off three days ago, do not be concerned about them, for they have been found. And for whom is everything that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's household?"

20 As for your donkeys which were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's household?"

20 Now as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, don't give any thought to them, because they've been found. Meanwhile, to whom is all Israel looking, if not to you and all of your father's household?"

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

- Samuel promised Saul that not only his lost donkeys, but all that was desirable in Israel, would soon come into his possession

— God resolved both searches through His relationship with Samuel: the people's king and Saul's father's donkeys

God's answers, and the way they are revealed, are meant to build trust and confidence in Him.

21 Saul replied, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"

21 Saul replied, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?"

21 Saul answered: "Am I not a descendant of Benjamin from the least of the tribes of Israel? Isn't my family the least important of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why have you spoken to me like this?"

21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

- Astounded, Saul could only reply that he was unworthy of this high honor; transparency and humility are evident at this stage of his career

22 Then Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and gave them a place at the head of those who were invited, who were about thirty men.

22 Then Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who were invited, who were about thirty men.

22 Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them to a room where he gave them a place at the head of those who were invited, of whom there were about 30 men.

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons.

- Samuel then invited Saul to sit with him as guest of honor at the sacrificial feast (v22-24) and then to spend the night in his home in the town below

23 And Samuel said to the cook, "Serve the portion that I gave you about which I said to you, 'Set it aside.'"

23 Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion that I gave you, concerning which I said to you, 'Set it aside.'"

23 Then Samuel told the cook, "Bring the portion that I gave you, the one I told you to set aside."

23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.

24 Then the cook took up the leg with what was on it and placed *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, "Here is what has been reserved! Place *it* before you *and* eat, because it has been kept for you until the appointed time, since I said I have invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

24 Then the cook took up the leg with what was on it and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, "Here is what has been reserved! Set *it* before you *and* eat, because it has been kept for you until the appointed time, since I said I have invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

24 The cook picked up the thigh and what was on it and set it in front of Saul. Then Samuel said, "Here is what is left! Set it before you and eat, for it has been kept for you until the appointed time, about which I said, 'I've invited the people.'" So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

24 And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25 When they came down from the high place *into* the city, *Samuel* spoke with Saul on the roof.

25 When they came down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* spoke with Saul on the roof.

25 When they had come down from the high place into town, Samuel spoke to Saul on the roof.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

- Next morning Samuel detained him so that he could communicate with him alone (with Saul's servant going on ahead) the revelation of God about his selection as king (v25-27)

26 And they got up early; and at daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, "Get up, so that I may send you on your way." So Saul got up, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

26 And they arose early; and at daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, "Get up, that I may send you away." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

26 They got up early in the morning, and about daybreak Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get up and I'll send you off." Saul got up and the two of them, he and Samuel, went outside.

26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

27 As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Speak to the servant and have him go on ahead of us and pass by; but you stand *here* now, so that I may proclaim the word of God to you."

27 As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Say to the servant that he might go ahead of us and pass on, but you remain standing now, that I may proclaim the word of God to you."

27 As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel told Saul, "Tell your young man to go ahead of us and when he has gone ahead, stop for a while so I may declare God's word to you."

27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

- Saul had everything in his favor:

(1) A strong body (10:23)

(2) A humble mind (9:21)

(3) A new heart (10:9)

(4) Spiritual power (10:10)

(5) Loyal friends (10:26)

(6) The guidance and prayers of Samuel

- Yet in spite of these advantages, he failed miserably. Why? Because he would not allow God to be the Lord of his life.

- In choosing Saul, the nation rejected the Father; much later in choosing Barabbas, they rejected the Son; and when they chose their own leaders instead of the witness of the Apostles, they rejected the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).