

1 Samuel 10 - Saul Anointed King

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

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

(3) Saul's coronation (10:17-27)

1 Samuel 10

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1 Samuel took a flask of oil, poured it on Saul's head, kissed him, and said, "The LORD has anointed you Commander-in-Chief over his inheritance, has he not?"

1 Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

- As Samuel prepared to reveal God's purposes to Saul, he first anointed him with oil

— In the OT, anointing with oil symbolized the setting apart of a person, or even an object, for divine service (Ex 30:23-33). It was also accompanied by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 10:6,10; 16:13).

— Before this, the only things anointed with oil were the priests and the tabernacle

— When Samuel poured oil on Saul's head, that act represented God's approval of Saul as leader of His people

- God's call immediately changed Saul's life. He left home looking for donkeys; he would return appointed as Israel's king.

2 When you leave me today, then you will find two men close to Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. Now behold, your father has stopped talking about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, "What am I to do about my son?"'

2 When you go from me today, then you will find two men close to Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. Now behold, your father has ceased to be concerned about the donkeys and is anxious for you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"'

2 When you leave me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah. They'll tell you, 'The donkeys you went to look for have been found.

Now your father has stopped worrying about the donkeys and he's anxious about you. He's asking, 'What will I do about my son?'

2 When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?

- Samuel gave to Saul a sign the fulfillment of which would confirm the divine nature of his call to kingship. In confirmation to both Saul and the people of his divine call and commission, Saul was told that he would experience three signs:

(1) He would meet two men near Rachel's tomb at Zelzah (v2), who would tell him the whereabouts of the lost donkeys

(2) He would meet three men at the (oak) tree of Tabor (v3), somewhere between Zelzah and Gibeah, who would give him two loaves of bread

(3) He would meet a procession of prophets descending from the high place at Gibeah (v5)

Warren Wiersbe believed that Saul should have learned the following lessons from these three signs: (1) God could solve his problems; (2) God could supply his needs; (3) God could endue him with the power he needed for service.

As with Saul, God intends for us to depend on Him to do His work. Believers would not need God, or grow in Christlikeness, if they only did things they could do in their own power.

3 Then you will go on further from there, and you will come as far as the oak of Tabor, and there three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you: one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a jug of wine.

3 Then you will go on further from there, and you will come as far as the oak of Tabor, and there three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a jug of wine;

3 Then you'll go on further from there and come to the oak at Tabor. There three men going up to the LORD at Bethel will meet you. One will be herding three young goats, one will be carrying three loaves of bread, and one will be carrying a bottle of wine.

3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

- The oak of Tabor is supposed by some to be identified with the tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel (Judges 4:5)

4 And they will greet you and give you two *loaves* of bread, *which* you will accept from their hand.

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4 They'll greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you're to accept from them.

4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.

5 Afterward you will come to **the hill of God** where the Philistine **garrison** is; and it shall be as soon as you have come there to the city, that you will meet a **group of prophets** coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and a lyre in front of them, and they will be prophesying.

5 Afterward you will come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is; and it shall be as soon as you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and a lyre before them, and they will be prophesying.

5 "After that you will come to Gibeath-elohim where the Philistine garrison is. As you arrive there at the town, you'll meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre being played in front of them, and they'll be prophesying.

5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

- "...the hill of God" - the "Gibeah" of God

— Gibeah is used to denote the bald, rounded hills of central Israel. The Philistine outpost here, just three miles north and east of Jerusalem, shows how deeply the Philistines had penetrated into Israel despite defeats during Samuel's rule.

- "...garrison" - may be the Philistine officer (13:3) placed in the city to maintain Philistine harmony and to collect tribute

- "...group of prophets" - this is the first mention of a prophetic guild in the OT

— The main interest of these prophets was to uphold the pure religion of the Lord against any syncretism with the fertility cult of Canaan. Some scholars have felt that Samuel was responsible for introducing the prophetic guilds.

6 Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be changed into a different man.

6 Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you mightily, and you shall prophesy with them and be changed into another man.

6 The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you'll prophesy with them and be changed into a different person.

6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

- The Spirit made the inexperienced and unlettered Saul able to assume kingly responsibilities in much the same way as the judges before him were blessed (Judges 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14)

Some Bible students have concluded that Saul was an unbeliever, since he did not remain faithful to the Lord. But since God chose and equipped Saul to rule His people, it seems most likely that he was a genuine believer, though he gave evidence of not having a strong commitment to Him. It's easier to say that Saul was a secular person, not a spiritual person.

7 And it shall be when these signs come to you, do for yourself what the occasion requires, because God is with you.

7 It shall be when these signs come to you, do for yourself what the occasion requires, for God is with you.

7 When these signs occur, do whatever you want to do, because the LORD is with you.

7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.

- God had given Saul three special signs to assure him (v1-7). Samuel also instructed Saul to tarry at Gilgal and wait for him to come (v8).

— Samuel foretold specific signs to confirm God's call of Saul

8 And you shall go down ahead of me to Gilgal; and behold, I will be coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings. You shall wait seven days until I come to you and inform you of what you should do."

8 And you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings. You shall wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you should do."

8 You are to go down ahead of me to Gilgal, and then I'll come down to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. You are to wait seven days until I come to you to let you know what you are to do."

8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

- This verse should be translated, "When you go before me to Gilgal"—that is, at some future date when King Saul would have the army ready for battle

— This event took place some years later (Cf. 13:7-14)

9 Then it happened, when he turned his back to leave Samuel, that **God changed his heart**; and all those signs came about on that day.

9 Then it happened when he turned his back to leave Samuel, God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day.

9 Now it happened as Saul turned his back to leave Samuel, that God gave him another heart, and all these signs occurred on that day.

9 And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.

- "...God changed his heart" - it's best to not interpret this reference to mean that Saul experienced personal salvation

— This always takes place when a person believes God's promise and there is no indication that Saul did so at this time

— The Spirit of God changed his character into headstrong courage and endowed him with the qualities needed for kingship (see note on v6)

10 When they came there to the hill, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, so that he prophesied among them.

10 When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them.

10 When they arrived there at Gibeah, a band of prophets was right there to meet them. The Spirit of God came upon Saul, and he prophesied along with them.

10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

- God's Spirit also gave him the ability to prophesy; this was the outward evidence that God was with Saul

11 And it came about, when all who previously knew him saw that he was indeed prophesying with the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

11 It came about, when all who knew him previously saw that he prophesied now with the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

11 When all those who had known Saul previously saw that he was there among the prophets prophesying, the people told one another, "What has happened to Kish's son? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto

the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?

12 And a man from there responded and said, "And who is their father?" Therefore it became a saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

12 A man there said, "Now, who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

12 A man from there answered: "Now who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

12 And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?

- The evidence of this new gift surprised the people who knew Saul

— So amazed were the witnesses to Saul's dramatic and powerful change of character that they created a proverb which thereafter was quoted to describe a totally unexpected and unexplainable phenomenon: Is Saul also among the prophets?

— This does not suggest, of course, that Saul became part of the prophetic ministry led by Samuel, but only that he was able to exercise a prophetic gift, at least on this occasion, though never having received prophetic training

— Further evidence that Saul did not actually become a prophet lies in the stem of the Hebrew verb here: He joined in their prophesying literally means, "He acted like a prophet among them," that is, to all outward appearances he was a prophet because he was able to enter into their activities.

13 When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

13 When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

13 When he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place.

13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

- This high place is probably the same one mentioned in v5,10

14 Now Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they were nowhere *to be found*, we went to Samuel."

14 Now Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they could not be found, we went to Samuel."

14 Saul's uncle told him and to his young man, "Where did you go?"

He said, "To look for the donkeys, and when we saw that they couldn't be found, we went to Samuel."

14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were no where, we came to Samuel.

15 Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."

15 Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."

15 Then Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel told you."

15 And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you.

16 So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell him about the matter of the kingdom which Samuel had mentioned.

16 So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell him about the matter of the kingdom which Samuel had mentioned.

16 Saul told his uncle, "He actually told us that the donkeys had been found," but he did not tell him about the matter of kingship about which Samuel had spoken.

16 And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

- Saul told his uncle about finding the donkeys with Samuel's help, but Saul said nothing about the kingship

— Keep in mind that this was at the beginning of the kingdom when everything was new. Samuel was still the spiritual ruler of the land, and he and Saul were waiting for God's leading concerning the future of the nation.

— Without modern means of transportation or communication, it would take months for Saul and Samuel to rally the people

Saul is Chosen by Lot

Saul's rise to kingship over Israel took place in three distinct stages:

(1) Anointed by Samuel (9:1—10:16)

(2) Chosen by lot (10:17-27)

(3) Confirmed by public acclamation (11:1-15)

(3) Saul's coronation (10:17-27)

17 Now Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah;

17 Thereafter Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah;

17 Samuel summoned the people to the LORD at Mizpah.

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpah;

- Sometime later Samuel gathered the leaders of Israel together at Mizpah, a favorite place for assembly in Samuel's day (Cf. 7:5-6)

— It was the scene of Israel's last spiritual revival and victory over the Philistines (7:5-13).

This location may have been chosen because of those events.

18 and he said to the sons of Israel, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: 'I brought Israel up from Egypt, and I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the power of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.'

18 and he said to the sons of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought Israel up from Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the power of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.'

18 He told the Israelis, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I rescued you from the power of Egypt and from the power of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.'

18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:

- Samuel took the opportunity to remind Israel that *Yahweh* was Israel's real deliverer so that the people would not put too much confidence in their new king (Cf. Ex 20:2; Deut 5:6; Judges 6:8-9)

— He also reminded them of their rebellion against God's will when they insisted on having a king (v19)

19 But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your catastrophes and your distresses; yet you have said, 'No, but put a king over us!' Now then, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your groups of thousands."

19 But you have today rejected your God, who delivers you from all your calamities and your distresses; yet you have said, 'No, but set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans."

19 But today you have rejected your God who delivers you from all your troubles and difficulties. You have said, 'No! Instead, appoint a king over us.' Now present yourselves in the LORD's presence by your tribes and families."

19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

- At the same time God changed Saul's heart and made him a new man, He gave a message to Samuel for His people: God reminded them of His faithfulness and their rejection of His rule by demanding a king

20 So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel forward; and the tribe of Benjamin was selected by lot.

20 Thus Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot.

20 Samuel brought forward all the tribes of Israel, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.

20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

- Casting lots showed everyone in Israel that Saul was God's choice, not Samuel's (Cf. Joshua 7:14-18); that is, he was the king that God permitted (Prov 16:33)

- Benjamin was a favorite son of Jacob and the only son of the twelve born in Israel proper. The temple area was near the territory of Benjamin and Judah.

21 Then he brought the tribe of Benjamin forward by its families, and the Matrite family was selected by lot. And Saul the son of Kish was selected by lot; but when they looked for him, he could not be found.

21 Then he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its families, and the Matrite family was taken. And Saul the son of Kish was taken; but when they looked for him, he could not be found.

21 Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin according to its families, and the family of Matri was chosen. Finally, Kish's son Saul was chosen, but when they looked for him, they couldn't find him.

21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

- After reminding them of their foolish insistence on having a king apart from the directive will of God, he set about to demonstrate God's selection of Saul by a process of elimination (10:18-19)

— By lot, the choice was made of tribe (Benjamin); clan that of Matri; and family, that of Kish (v20-21). But when Saul was chosen, he was nowhere to be found.

22 Therefore they inquired further of the LORD: "Has the man come here yet?" And the LORD said, "Behold, he is hiding himself among the baggage."

22 Therefore they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" So the LORD said, "Behold, he is hiding himself by the baggage."

22 So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?"

The LORD said, "He is here, hiding among the baggage."

22 Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23 So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward.

23 So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward.

23 They ran and brought him from there. When he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the others by a head.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

- Physical stature seems desirable for leadership. Perhaps it was an aid in war, both offensive and defensive, inasmuch as a tall man makes a good fighter and can easily be seen by those who follow him.

— Goliath was tall; Xerxes stood out above his men. Samuel also saw physical qualification in the eldest son of Jesse and was prepared to make him his choice for king.

24 Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people." So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"

24 Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people." So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"

24 Then Samuel told all the people, "Do you see the man whom the LORD has chosen? For there is no one like him among all the people." Then all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people **the ordinances of the kingdom**, and wrote *them* in the **book**, and placed *it* before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his house.

25 Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote *them* in the book and placed *it* before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his house.

25 Samuel explained to the people the regulations concerning kingship. He wrote them in a scroll and placed it in the LORD's presence. Then Samuel sent all the people to their own houses.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

- "...the ordinances of the kingdom" - as Moses had written the law for the community of Israel, so Samuel now wrote the constitution of the theocratic kingdom

- Samuel repeated and documented God's words about the rights and duties of kingship (8:10-18)
- This constitution has never been located. It would be interesting to read the rules and regulations set forth by Samuel.
- "...in a book" - a scroll, not a codex like we are used to today
- This scroll was deposited in a high place at Mizpeh. Undoubtedly the scroll included the Mosaic regulations for kingship found in Deut 17:14-20.

26 Saul also went to his house in Gibeah; and the valiant *men* whose hearts God had touched went with him.

26 Saul also went to his house at Gibeah; and the valiant *men* whose hearts God had touched went with him.

26 Saul also went to his house in Gibeah, and the soldiers whose hearts God had touched went with him.

26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

- God further blessed Saul by inclining the hearts of valiant men in Israel to support him

— Probably these were the men who formed Saul's cabinet

— They went home with Saul to Gibeah, where from his farm he ruled as a gentleman farmer

— The ruins of the estate of Saul, about four miles north of Jerusalem, have been the subject of much excavation. It is possible to see from Gibeah across the valley to Nebi Samuel (Mizpeh), one of the stations for Samuel's ministry.

27 But certain useless men said, "How can this one save us?" And they despised him and did not bring him a gift. But he kept silent *about it*.

27 But certain worthless men said, "How can this one deliver us?" And they despised him and did not bring him any present. But he kept silent.

27 But some troublemakers said, "How can this man deliver us?" They despised him and did not bring him a gift. But Saul remained silent.

27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

- Indicative of his unassuming humility were his initial attempts to avoid the glare of publicity (v22) and his refusal to be vindictive against those who ridiculed his selection as king (v27)

— He was a wise enough man to not demand acceptance by every individual in Israel (Cf. Prov 14:29; Rom 12:19; James 1:19-20)

- An opposition party formed early. Samuel describes the members as sons of Belial; i.e., "hellions." Their refusal to present gifts according to custom was ignored by the magnanimous Saul, and his spirit of generosity got him off to a good start.

However, in the eyes of the Lord, Saul was not qualified. The prophetic word of Jacob was that the scepter (of kingship) would not depart from Judah (Gen 49:10) until the Messiah came. The promised dynasty of kings which would eventually produce the Messiah must originate in Judah.

Saul as a Benjamite could not, then, meet the basic prerequisite of lineage. This is also confirmed in the prophecy hidden in Ruth 4. Nonetheless, the people had made their demand, and the LORD had acquiesced.

28 [ISV] Meanwhile, Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been severely oppressing the descendants of Gad and descendants of Reuben, gouging out their right eyes and not allowing Israel to have a deliverer. No one was left among the Israelis across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. However, 7,000 men had escaped from the Ammonites and entered Jabesh-gilead.

28 [KJV] MT and LXX do not contain this verse