

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 10

- Vv. 1- 8 *Saul anointed by Samuel.* The priests were anointed (Leviticus 8:10). The prophets of Israel were also set aside to their office by this solemn ceremony (I Kings 19:16). The king was also to be set aside to his office by a divine service.
- Vv. 9-16 *Saul among the prophets.* This saying became a proverb in Israel, and is used often to express amazement at a person's being in unusual company: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Samuel 10:12 b). His meeting the band of prophets and the change of heart which came upon him had been foretold by Samuel when the two parted company. His change of heart was typical of those charismatic leaders upon whom God's spirit came as they entered into their offices.
- Vv. 17-27 *Saul acclaimed by the people.* Samuel called the people to a solemn assembly. He issued grave warnings to them about the nature of a king, even writing the manner of the kingdom in a book and laying it up before the Lord to be preserved for future generations (v. 25). He proceeded then to implement the establishment of the king in his office. In prayerful spirit, the people shouted: "God save the king" (v. 24 b). As in most political situations, there was not complete unanimity of opinion; but it was only the "worthless fellows" who opposed Saul's coronation (v. 27).

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *The blessing of the spirit of God.* When God raised up judges to deliver His people, He sent His spirit upon

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them (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19). When the Spirit of God came upon Saul, he prophesied among the prophets. Although Christians today are not to expect miraculous manifestations of the Spirit of God in their lives, each Christian has the gift of the Holy Spirit to rest and abide in his life as he becomes an obedient child of God (Acts 2:38). God's Spirit bearing witness with his spirit enables him not only to begin a Christian life but to bring forth the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-26).

2. *The fellowship of the faithful.* Hardly any situation in everyday life finds a great number of people to be of unanimous opinion. The sharpest division of opinion and purpose occurs between good men and evil men. Those who are in a position of leadership in God's work ought not to grieve too much that there are wicked opponents of their good work, but they ought to give thanks daily for those who join with them in the good work they are doing. When Saul was anointed king, ". . . there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched" (10:26). Those whose hearts have been touched by God will uphold God's leaders today.

Saul Anointed by Samuel. 10:1-8

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?

2 When thou art departed from me today, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulcher 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?

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 Beth-el, one carrying

three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

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

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:

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

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

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 show thee what thou shalt do.

1. *When was Saul anointed king at first? 10:1*

On the morrow after the feast which Samuel and Saul celebrated together, Samuel called Saul from his bed early in the morning. As they went toward the edge of the town, Samuel told Saul to send the servant on ahead. Samuel then took a vial of oil and poured it upon Saul's head and kissed him. This anointing with oil was a symbol of endowment with the Spirit of God. Hitherto there had been no other anointing among the people of God than that of the priests and the sanctuary. Thus the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution. Now the king was set apart from the rest of the nation as "anointed of the Lord." The kiss bestowed by Samuel must have been only a mark of personal affection, for kissing is nowhere an act expressive of fealty to a king.

2. Where was Rachel's sepulchre? 10:2

According to Genesis 35:16, Rachel's sepulchre was on the way from Bethel to Bethlehem, only a short distance from the latter place. Jerome mentions a tradition of the tomb being located here. This traditional site is northwest of Bethlehem, and west of the road between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Saul's passing by the tomb is another indication of the fact that he was not anointed by Samuel in Ramah. If he were southwest of Bethlehem when he met Samuel, he would naturally pass near Rachel's tomb on the way to Gibeah in Benjamin. He would have no need to pass by Rachel's tomb down in Judah if he were in Ramah when he was anointed. To go from Ramah to Gibeah, he would pass only through the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

3. Where was Zelzah? 10:2 b

The expression "in the border of Benjamin" does not make it impossible for Saul to be traveling from near Bethlehem to his home. The traditional site of Rachel's tomb is several miles away from the southern border of Benjamin. The mention of Zelzah helps us to understand what is meant by the mention of the border and would be superfluous otherwise since Rachel's tomb was unquestionably a well-known place. Zelzah must have been up between Rachel's tomb and the south border of Benjamin. It is otherwise an unknown location, but it should not be translated by the phrase "in great haste." It is undoubtedly a reference to a place and not a Hebrew word to describe Saul's manner of traveling.

4. Where was the plain of Tabor? 10:3

Elsewhere the word translated plain in this verse is translated with the word *oak*. It is simply mentioned here as one of the points on the homeward journey of Saul. The place is nowhere else mentioned, and nothing further can be determined concerning it other than it stood by the road leading from Rachel's tomb to Gibeah. It no

doubt meant a great deal to Saul as a point of reference, but it has little meaning for us today.

5. *What was the hill of God? 10:5*

This is not a high place of God, a place dedicated to God's worship, but rather a reference to Gibeah, the native place of Saul. Gibeah is sometimes called the high place of Saul (11:4; 15:34; II Samuel 21:6). It is called the hill of God here because of the sacrificial height which rose within or near the town (10:13), and which may have possibly have been more famous than any other such heights. Here the Philistines had a military post. It was a seat for the school of the prophets (II Kings 2:3).

6. *Who were the company of the prophets? 10:5 b*

"Bands," or "schools," of the prophets were the men of God. They were active in Israel from this time forward to the time of Amos, who said he was not a prophet nor a "son of the prophets" (Amos 7:14). No definite reason is assigned to their going in the direction opposite to Saul at this time, other than that they had been in the high place for worship.

7. *Did they use instrumental music in their worship? 10:5c*

These prophets had with them a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp. As far back as we have any record of music in worship, we find reference to instruments connected with the worship. God has never prohibited the use of these instruments, and there is even indication of different kinds of music in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:19)—both accompanied and unaccompanied.

8. *What signs were given to Saul to substantiate his appointment? 10:2-7*

Saul was told that he would meet two men in the vicinity of Rachel's tomb, and these men would tell him of his father's concern for his safety. This would substantiate the seer's announcement concerning the animals and also

raise Saul's thoughts to concern for his new work. The second sign was his meeting three men going up to God to Bethel, carrying three kids, three loaves of bread, and a bottle of wine. Saul was told to accept their inquiry concerning his welfare and their proffered gift of two loaves. The third sign concerned Saul's meeting a group of prophets who were to be coming down from Gibeah, his home town. As Saul met these men, it was prophesied that he too would be filled with the spirit of God and begin to prophesy as did the prophets.

9. *Where was Gilgal?* 10:8

Gilgal was one of the towns on Samuel's circuit (7-16). The people of Israel had been circumcised there immediately after they had crossed Jordan into Canaan under Joshua's leadership (Joshua 4:19). The spot was located in the border of the tribe of Benjamin and would be found between Jericho and the Jordan river. Some evidence is seen for there being another location by this name in the hill country of Ephraim (Joshua 9:6; 10:15), but the former location seems more appropriate to the narrative here. No doubt Samuel wanted to meet Saul at Gilgal as he made his next appointed visit on his circuit.

Saul Among the Prophets. 10:9-16

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.

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.

11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him before-time 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 one of the same place answered and said, But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is Saul also among the prophets?*

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

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

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.

10. *What is the meaning of the proverb? 10:13*

Saul was known as the son of Kish, the man of Benjamin. He was evidently acquainted with rural life, and his father had sent him out to look for his lost she-asses. To find Saul among the prophets of God was an unexpected experience. Those who knew Saul were surprised to find him in such company. They asked, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Whenever we find someone in a group to which he is not accustomed, we often ask the same question. This is especially true when one is found in the company of those who are generally considered to be of a higher class. The proverb was evidently used this way in Israel in ancient times.

11. *Who was Saul's uncle? 10:14*

Saul was introduced as the son of Kish (9:1), the son of Abiel (14:51). Abner became Saul's captain, and they were very closely associated throughout the reign of Saul. This constant association would indicate that they might have been reared in the same community. Such a condition would point to Ner's being the uncle mentioned in this account of Saul's return to his home.

12. *Why was Saul's uncle anxious to know what Samuel said? 10:15 b*

Here is an indication of how the people did not let any of Samuel's words "fall to the ground" (3:19). Whatever Samuel had to say was of interest to the people of Israel. It would be hard to imagine that Ner would have any idea that his nephew would be chosen king. His inquiry undoubtedly was one of general curiosity and wholesome interest in any pronouncement of the man of God. Saul did not mention anything about his being anointed king of Israel or his relationship to the kingdom which the people were wanting to see established. The latest developments along the line of setting up the monarchy may have been a part of the uncle's interest; but Saul did not divulge what had happened to him in this respect. Josephus indicates that Saul kept this secret because he did not want to arouse unbelief or envy. Others believe that it was probably because of his unambitious humility.

Saul Acclaimed by the People. 10:17-27

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh;

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:

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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 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.

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

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.

13. *Where was Saul anointed a second time? 10:17-27*

Saul was anointed publicly at Mizpeh. It is quite appropriate that the anointing take place here, because it was at Mizpeh that the Israelites repented and defeated the Philistines. It was here also that the judges had met to make many decisions and to worship. Here at Mizpeh Saul was chosen by lot. First the tribe from among the twelve tribes was selected, then the family from within the selected tribe, the household within the family, and finally the man from within the household. God thus guided them in the selection. When Saul was singled out, he hid

from the people because of his modesty. Had he only kept this attitude, his affairs would have had a different ending.

14. *Who was Matri? 10:21*

Matri is a Hebrew name meaning Rainy. He was evidently a Benjaminite and head of the family to which Saul, the king of Israel, belonged. The mention here is the only mention in the Scripture, but this would place him considerably earlier than 1020 B.C. The fact that he was so unimportant has caused his name to drop out of the genealogies. First Chronicles gives evidence that many of the genealogical lines may be incomplete. As has been generally concluded before, the genealogies in the Scriptures list only the important people in most cases.

15. *Why did Saul hide? 10:22*

Saul spoke very humbly of himself when he first met Samuel. He said that he was a member of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest in all the land. He also said that his family was the least of all the families within this tribe (9:21). The task of reigning over the people may have seemed overwhelming to him. In his humility he ran and hid. Without accusing Saul of mistrusting God, we can believe that he was not willing to step out and take God at His word. He need not trust in his own strength alone, and this reluctance must have been largely born out of humility.

16. *How could Samuel say that God had chosen Saul?*
10:24

God had told Samuel that He would send a man to him to be anointed king. God indicated that the man was Saul as he came to Samuel seeking information about his lost animals (9:17). In this way God had chosen Saul and sent him to Samuel. The people were the ones who were anxious to have a king, yet God had chosen the man to fill the office. He met the qualifications given in the Law (Deuteronomy 17:14-20), and in addition he was bigger

than any other man in all the land. He made a striking appearance and was a popular choice.

17. *What was the meaning of the shout? 10:24*

In the Authorized Version, the phrase is translated: "God save the king." The American Standard Version has this: "Long live the king." The literal meaning of the original language is as follows: "Let the king live." It is typical English usage to make the phrase to be the equivalent of the idiom, "God save the king." It is really a prayer that the king might enjoy long life and prosper as the leader of God's people. By this shout the people acclaim Saul as their ruler and pledge their allegiance to him.

18. *What opposition did Saul have? 10:27*

None seemed to oppose the monarchy on the grounds that it was against God's will. The people had rejected God's will. The people had rejected God, but in His mercy He led them to select and appoint an acceptable ruler. As in every major crowd, there were some who were unwilling to see Saul in the office of king. They are described as worthless fellows, sons of Belial. Satan was at work even in the early days of the monarchy. The fact that these evil men did not bring presents to Saul indicates that the other people did bring tokens of their love and esteem. Some of their presents may have been to support him through the critical years of the infancy of the monarchy.

CHAPTER 10 IN REVIEW

1. With what was Saul anointed? _____
2. What mark of personal affection did Samuel bestow on Saul? _____
3. By what memorial did Samuel tell Saul he would meet two young men? _____
4. What kind of musical instruments did they have? _____

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5. How many men going up to Bethel was Saul to see? _____
6. What items of offering were they to have? _____
7. To what town was Saul to go to meet Samuel again? _____
8. In what unusual activity was Saul to participate after God's spirit came upon him? _____
9. Who was Saul's uncle? _____
10. Where was Saul anointed a second time? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1-3 *Jabesh-gilead attacked.* Israel was seldom free from oppression and opposition. This may have been the meaning of the spies who said, "The land, . . . , is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" (Numbers 13:32). Many of the attacks came from neighbors nearby, and the Ammonite people were such neighbors.
- Vv. 4-11 *Jabesh-gilead delivered.* The Spirit of God came upon Saul, and he took immediate steps to rescue the Trans-jordan residents of Jabesh-gilead from the clutches of their attackers. His kindness on their behalf made them his lifelong friends.
- Vv. 12-25 *The kingship of Saul renewed.* Samuel called the people to an assembly at Gilgal. Saul was again presented to the people, and some called for the punishment of those who had rejected the kingship of Saul when he was first crowned king. Saul's magnanimity prevailed, and the worthless fellows who had opposed him at the first were spared. This happy solution to the situation caused all Israel to return to their homes with joy.