

Samuel Anoints Saul – 1 Samuel 9:1-10:16

Introduction:

The people wanted a king. Samuel is devastated but God is not surprised. God knew the hearts of the people could be easily drawn away from Him to lesser things. Despite the warnings about the cost of having a king, the people could not be dissuaded. They wanted a king.

So in this chapter a man is selected who would be the first king of Israel. However, from the start there are red flags all over the place, warnings that even this seemingly perfect candidate may not be what Israel needs. God is in control, but God seems to be giving the people what they want, not what they need. Why would God do this? Could it be God's way to draw the people to Himself?

God's desire above all else is that we have a relationship of faithful trust in Him. Israel has been rescued from Egypt, granted a new land to live in, even given victory over its enemies time and time again. Yet she still would not trust in God alone as her leader and provider. What would be the outcome of such faithlessness? This is the journey we are about to embark on...

Three Warning Flags – 1 Samuel 9:1-10

1. What do we learn about Saul in verses 1-2? On the surface, does Saul seem like a good candidate to be a king? What is missing from this description?

Background: Saul's family is from the tribe of Benjamin. That is mentioned twice in verse 1. This means Saul's family likely came from the city of Gibeah. This city was infamous for a brutal story of a Levite coming to town with his concubine, seeking shelter. That night the concubine is raped until she dies, and so the Levite cuts her into twelve pieces, sends a piece to each tribe and calls them to exact judgement for such a terrible deed. What follows is a great battle and slaughter. (Judges 19) Was Saul's family part of that terrible crime? They likely were part of the battle that followed. Saul's father is said to be a man of wealth (ESV) or standing (NIV) or valour (NASB). If "valour" is the correct translation of that word, maybe Kish was distinguished in that battle as a great warrior! And since Gibeon lost so many women in that battle they had

to kidnap women from Shiloh for brides, could Saul's mother be one of those kidnapped brides? We see just a genealogy and hurry over it as quick as possible. The first readers would have immediately made the connections to the past and wondered about the suitability of this one to be king.

2. So the first red flag might be his family of origin. The second red flag may be found in verse 3. What is Saul called to look after? What animal did Moses care for? And what animal does David care for?
3. As we read through verse 4, what impression do we get about this search? Was it successful?
4. By the time Saul and his servant reach Zuph, what does Saul conclude? What is his plan of action?
5. Our third red flag occurs in verse 6. Who is it that suggests a man of God should be consulted? What appears to be Saul's knowledge of this man (despite what 1 Samuel 3:20 says)?
6. Verse 7 reveals a practice that was expected when consulting a "man of God" or a "prophet." What was it?
7. In verse 8 who comes up with a gift for the man of God? If Saul came from a family of wealth and prestige, does this seem odd?
8. In verse 9 we get a quick commentary to help the reader understand some of the terminology. What do we discover here?
9. To Saul's favour, is he agreeable to the plan of the servant (v. 10)? If they are looking for Samuel, what town might they be entering? (cf. 1 Samuel 8:4)

Samuel Prepared to Meet Saul – 1 Samuel 9:11-17

10. Verse 11 reveals a great place to get information. Where was it? Why was this such a great place to gain information?
11. According to verses 12-13, why was Samuel in town? What was the role he would play at the dinner?

12. Verse 15 takes us back a day before Saul and his servant showed up. What happened the day before Saul showed up (v. 16)? What was Samuel to do when he met the Benjamite?
13. What specific task did God have for Saul (v. 16)? What title does God give Saul? Why is Saul being chosen for this task?
14. How did Samuel know Saul was the man God had told him about (v. 17)?

Saul Meets Samuel – 1 Samuel 9:18-24

15. According to verse 18, how much did Saul know about Samuel? What might this tell us about Saul's religious devotion (his attendance at sacrifices)?
16. Samuel reveals himself as the seer to Saul and then tells him to do two things. What were those two things (v. 19)?
17. The journey started because of some lost donkeys. What does Samuel reveal about the donkeys (v. 20)? How did Samuel know? Why give this information?
18. The second half of verse 20 reveals that there is a bigger purpose for Saul. What would you say is "the desire of Israel"?
19. In verse 21 we get the idea that Saul understands what Samuel is getting at. What is Saul's objection?
20. In verses 22-24 it is apparent that Samuel has arranged this meal. What details given here let us see Samuel as the one in charge of the meal?
21. Noting where Saul is seated and what he is served, what would be the message to the invited guests? Does Samuel reveal why this stranger is being honoured in this way?

Saul's Anointing and Signs of Confirmation – 1 Samuel 9:25 – 10:16

22. Verse 25-27 tell of Saul's preparations to leave and start the journey home. In the evening Samuel talks with Saul – it would be interesting to know what was

said. Instead, we wait until morning to hear the message God has for Saul. According to 10:1, what does Samuel do? Why? (note the origins of the phrase “Anointed One”)

23. What is the first sign Saul will encounter on the way home to confirm this truly was a message from God (v. 2)?
24. What is the second sign Saul is to look for as he journeys home (vss. 3-4)?
25. What will happen to Saul when he meets a band of prophets (vss. 5-6)?
26. According to verse 7, what is Saul to do after he is changed by the Spirit of God?
27. What else is Saul to do according to verse 8? Why might there be the seven days of waiting?
28. What happens to Saul as Samuel is about to leave (v. 9)? What might that mean?
29. In verses 10-13 we read of the fulfilment of one of the prophecies Samuel gave Saul. Which one was it? What happened? Do you think the other events also happened as Samuel said they would?
30. Who confronts Saul when he returns home (v. 14)? What does he ask?
31. What does Saul tell his uncle about the trip (vss. 14-16)? What does he not tell him? Why?

Conclusion

Israel is about to get her ruler. God has chosen a man who would appeal to the people – tall and good looking, from a warrior’s family. But we already notice some missing characteristics in Saul – there seems little religious devotion or fear of the Lord. God works a makeover on Saul, putting His Spirit on Saul, and Saul is so changed he begins to prophesy. His friends who have known him awhile are amazed to see him with those religious folk. Despite the red flags, maybe there is hope for Israel. Maybe Saul will be a good king. What will be the key to success ... or failure? The next few chapters will spell that out for us.