

SAUL, ISRAEL'S FIRST KING

BIBLE TEXT: I Samuel 9:1-27; 10:1-27

LESSON 205 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (I Corinthians 1:27)

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Samuel 9:1-27

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.

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.

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.

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 Benjamites, but they found *them* not.

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.

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.

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

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 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:

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Saul's Visit to Samuel

1 Saul, the son of a mighty man of power, has a wonderful physique, I Samuel 9:1, 2

2 He is sent by his father to seek lost livestock, I Samuel 9:3-5;

Amos 7:14-15

¹⁴ Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I *was* no prophet, neither *was* I a prophet's son; but I *was* an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit:

¹⁵ And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

3 Saul is led of God to Samuel, I Samuel 9:6-17

4 Samuel honors Saul at the feast, I Samuel 9:18-27

5 Saul manifests humility, I Samuel 9:21; 10:22;

Proverbs 15:33

³³ The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; and before honour *is* humility.

Proverbs 22:4

⁴ By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *are* riches, and honour, and life.

Isaiah 57:15

¹⁵ For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

James 4:6

⁶ But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

II Saul's Anointing

1 Samuel anoints Saul and gives three signs, I Samuel 10:1-8

2 Saul is saved, I Samuel 10:9-13

3 He is chosen by lot to be king, I Samuel 10:14-27

NOTES:

Saul, a Physical Specimen

When God chose Saul to reign over Israel. He chose a man of marvelous physique. He was a "goodly" or handsome man, the best to be found in Israel. He was a tall, athletic specimen, perhaps about seven feet in height, which in the eyes of Israel made an ideal man to lead the army of Israel. His father, Kish, was a "mighty man of power" — no doubt a man of wealth and influence among the people.

Sent to Samuel

It may seem as though it were a matter of chance that Saul came to Samuel while seeking after the lost livestock of his father. But God told Samuel, "To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin." God said, "I will send... ." Many times it seems as though it were by accident that people have been led to hear the Gospel, but it is not an accident — it is Divine direction. If a man is hungry for the truth, God will lead him over land and sea, if need be, that he might hear the truth and be set free. Saul searched the land of Shalisha, Shalim, Benjamin, and Zuph until he came to the man of God — but God brought him there.

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

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.

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.

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 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.

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?

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?

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.

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

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.

Good Qualities

One of the good qualities that Saul possessed early in life was humility. When Samuel suggested that he was the one that Israel was to choose for their king, Saul replied, "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?" It was this humility that caused him to hide himself among the stuff at a time that he was to be honored among the people. God loves humility and hates pride.

A haughty monarch once made his boast, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30). While the words were yet in his mouth God humbled him by taking his kingdom from him; yes, and not only his kingdom, but also his reason. It is well for man to know that he has nothing that God did not give him or permit him to obtain. If you have wealth, "Thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17).

Humility

The words of Saul were, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least...?" When God called Gideon, his reply was, "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Judges 6:15). God chooses humble men that He might show forth His great power.

When the Lord told Moses that He would send him to Pharaoh, Moses said, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11). "Who am I?" Who are any of us that God should show unto us His great power? It is only this: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." Paul the great Apostle to the Gentiles said, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle" (I Corinthians 15:9). God's great men are humble men. Even among sinners it is often said, "The truly great are humble."

Wisdom

The wisdom that Saul had was manifest when the children of Belial said with a sneer, "How shall this man save us?" Saul held his peace. Solomon wrote, "He that refraineth his lips is wise," and Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles" (Proverbs 10:19; 21:23). Through James we learn that our religion is vain unless we bridle our tongue. Pilate marveled that our Savior kept silence when He was reviled. Is your wisdom known by a seal upon your lips?

A Rich Reward

When the servant of Saul suggested that they go to the man of God to inquire of the way, Saul said, "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?" The servant answered, "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." "What have we?" Saul came to the man of God with a vessel spent and empty, to inquire of the way. He came to the right

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.*

1 Samuel 10:1-27

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?*

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?

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:

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 shalt 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 shew thee what thou shalt do.

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

source. The man of God showed him the way. He came empty and went away with a crown. He came, a herdman; and left, a king. Yes, and more than a king! He came a sinner and departed a child of God.

What a marvelous thing is this! We come to the Lord broken, spent, and empty; we leave with the fullness of joy. We kneel before Him as a sinner, guilty, condemned to die; we receive forgiveness with a full pardon. We, who were slaves of Satan, are now heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I John 3:1).

A New Creature

There can be no doubt that Saul received a definite experience of salvation. Samuel told him, "The Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." We are told, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17), which is another way of saying that he is "another man." The same thing is implied when Jesus said, "Ye must be born again."

When we are saved, we are not only forgiven for our sins, but we are transformed. A miracle is wrought which changes us from children of this world to children of God. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." We who were dead in trespasses and sin, live to walk in newness of life. God gave Saul "another heart," and "the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied." What a change this was in the life of Saul! Surely no one can doubt that Saul was saved. All those who knew him before asked with wonderment, "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish?" Is Saul also among the prophets?" So great was the surprise of the people that it became a proverb or saying among them, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

A Good Start — A Sad End

What a wonderful start for the man whom God had chosen to rule over Israel! But how sad it is that he did not long continue in the way into which God had led him. It is a warning to all today that it is possible to receive the "born-again experience" and become a child of God and then to backslide and eventually be eternally lost. Saul once knew the fellowship and favor of God, but there came a time when the Spirit of God departed from him and "the LORD answered him not" (I Samuel 28:6).

A suicide's grave and a devil's hell was the fate of the man of whom the people once asked, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Jesus said, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). It is well for the man that has started in the way to "take heed lest he fall."

QUESTIONS

- 1 How tall do you think Saul was?
- 2 From which tribe of Israel was he?
- 3 How do we know that Saul's coming to Samuel was not by chance?
- 4 What good qualities did Saul manifest?
- 5 How do we know that Saul was converted?
- 6 Give Scriptural proof that it is possible to be saved and then to backslide and eventually be eternally lost.
- 7 What promises does God give to the humble?
- 8 In what manner did Saul manifest wisdom?
- 9 What is the value in our money of one fourth of a shekel?
- 10 What were the signs that Samuel gave Saul to show that God was with him?

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.

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 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 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.