

SAUL, ISRAEL'S FIRST KING

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

LESSON 205 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "When thou wert little in thine own sight, wert thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?" (I Samuel 15:17).

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:

¹³ As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

God's Choice

The Children of Israel had insisted that they wanted a king to rule over them, so they would be like the other nations. The young man chosen by God to be king was a Benjamite, the son of Kish who was a mighty man of power. Saul was a choice young man. He showed respect to his father. He was ambitious and humble. Had Saul been chosen by the people, undoubtedly they would have picked him because of his appearance, for Saul was tall and strong. No doubt, God chose Saul because in the heart of that young man, He could see the qualities that He could use for a king at that time. In God's own way Saul was brought before Samuel, the man of God, who was to deliver the message of God's choice for king.

Obedient

Saul was sent for his father's lost animals. He obeyed his father, for he was not too proud to work. Some young men would answer their father's request with such remarks: "I have other plans"; "Let someone else find them"; or "Why should I work when we have servants?" When Saul obeyed his father, he had no idea what God had in store for him. He obeyed because there was love and respect in his heart for his father. He probably would not have been chosen by God if he had refused to obey his father.

An Errand

Saul and a servant looked in many places but did not find the lost animals. Finally Saul decided to return home lest his father would begin to worry about them, since they had been gone so long. The servant said that there was a man of God in a nearby city. He suggested that maybe the Prophet could tell them the way that they should go. Saul thought that was a good idea, so they started out to find the Prophet — or seer, as he had been called in the past. When the two men arrived near the city, they inquired about the Prophet. They were told that they were just in time, that he was about to offer the "sacrifice of the people."

Sent by God

God had arranged the meeting of Saul and Samuel the Prophet. Although it appeared to be by chance, their meeting was planned by God. The day before, God had told Samuel that He was sending the young man who was to be anointed captain over Israel. It seems that Saul had had no position of honor or trust prior to this time. God was promoting him to be king.

Saul had been directed to Samuel; but when he met the prophet, he did not know him. But Samuel knew Saul, because God said, "Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people."

When Saul asked directions to the Prophet's house,

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.

²⁷ *And* as they were going down to the end of

Samuel said, "I am the seer." Samuel told Saul about the animals before he had a chance to inquire about them. God had given Samuel the answer. Samuel told Saul to forget about the animals for a while, that they were already found. Samuel invited Saul to go to the place of sacrifice, to eat, and to stay with him until the next day.

Humility

Furthermore, Samuel said that "all the desire of Israel" was upon Saul and his father's house. The desire of Israel was for a king to rule over them. So Saul was told that he had been chosen to be the Israelites' king. Saul gave a very modest answer. He said that he was of the smallest tribe and of the least family. Saul had been sent on an errand, seeking his father's lost animals; but he humbly accepted the bid to a higher place.

Honor

Samuel treated Saul with all the honor due the future king. Saul was given the "chiefest place among them that were bidden" — about thirty guests. He was served with the choice meat — the shoulder. Thus, by the best place and choice food, Saul was treated as the distinguished and honored guest.

Before going to bed that night, Samuel had a talk with Saul. Perhaps he told Saul about his responsibilities as ruler of Israel. Samuel, no doubt, encouraged Saul in the work that he was to do. The next morning they arose early. When Saul and the servant left, Samuel went with them to the end of the city. The servant was sent ahead. The Prophet said to Saul, "Stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God."

Little did Saul know what blessing God had for him that morning. Together with the Prophet, Saul paused before the Lord. As God had directed, Samuel poured oil over the head of Saul to anoint him. God had chosen Saul to be captain over His inheritance, the Children of Israel.

Promises

To show that God was with Saul, the Prophet gave him three signs which would come to pass. These *signs* were also promises. First, two men would give news to Saul concerning his business: "The asses which thou wentest to seek are found." Second, Saul's physical need would be supplied by three men whom he would meet on the plain of Tabor: "And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands." Third, Saul would have spiritual fitness when he met a group of prophets at the hill of God: "The Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them . . . for God is with thee."

Standing Still

These promises must have been a great encouragement to Saul. Remember, God sent them to him when Saul was told to stand still to hear the words of God. What will God do for us when we pause before Him? It may seem difficult to "stand still" when about us is the noise and confusion of a busy world. Those who pray and meditate before God in the morning find that He will give encouragement for their work and help in the time of need. The child who prays and reads the Bible before going to

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 prophets?

school will find promises that God will be with him to give the victory in every trial. It is to our advantage to meditate and think of the things of God — to "stand still" before God — during the day as well as in the morning. Blessed is the man whose "delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:1, 2).

Another Heart

God had called Saul to fill an important place. God had given Saul some wonderful promises. We do not read that Saul answered an audible word to God's call, but in his heart he answered "Yes" to God. How do we know? The Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he was changed — "turned into another man." The Spirit of the Lord does not abide with any person unless He is invited and wanted. God does not save any person unless that person wants to be saved. When the Spirit of God comes into a life, sin goes out and that person is changed. God gave Saul "another heart" — "a new heart" like that which God promised to all Israel if they turned to Him (Ezekiel 36:26, 27), a "heart to know me, that I am the LORD," which God would give when the people turned to Him with their whole heart (**Jeremiah 24:7** ⁷ *And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart*).

The Same Change

God makes the same change today; He changes the heart when a person is saved. There is no difference whether the person is a child or an adult. God takes out the love of evil and sin; He takes out the desire for pleasures of the world. Jealousy, hatred, temper, "sassiness," and every evil thing is gone. In the heart God puts His love which causes one to do good and to want to know God better. When the heart is changed, the actions of the person are different. Others can tell that a change for the good has taken place.

The signs concerning Saul came to pass, and the people saw the change in Saul. They said, "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

No Hiding Place

Saul did not tell even his own family that he had been anointed to be king. In due time, Samuel gathered the Children of Israel to remind them that they had rejected God and asked for a king. The time had come for the people to know God's choice. When it was revealed to the people that Saul was the man, he was nowhere to be seen. In his humility, he had hidden himself. Now Saul was a tall man, head and shoulders above any of the people, so it would not be easy for him to hide in the crowd. Saul did not hide long, for God knew where he was. God said of Saul, "Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff." Saul was brought; and before all the people Samuel presented him as their king. A great shout went up from all the people.

Saul returned to his home, accompanied by a loyal band of men. As we study more about the first king of the Israelites, let us keep in mind that he was given this great privilege and honor when he was a very humble man.

QUESTIONS

- 1 To which tribe of the Israelites did Saul belong?
- 2 On what humble errand was he sent?
- 3 To whom did Saul go?
- 4 What did Samuel do for Saul?
- 5 What promises were made to Saul?
- 6 How did Saul show his humility?
- 7 What happens when the Spirit of God comes into one's heart?
- 8 Why did the people ask if Saul was 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.

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.