

Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 10:9-27

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1 Samuel 10:9-27

(Samuel, Israel's last Judge, received Israel's request for a human king to reign over them. He took the matter to God in prayer and was told to appoint the man of God's choosing to be Israel's first human king. God revealed to Samuel that Saul, the son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin, was to be Israel's first king. Samuel met with Saul and revealed this to him giving him signs that would confirm Saul's anointing as king. Saul was to return to his home, keeping all this secret for seven days (see 1 Samuel 10:1-8).

Verses 9-13

⁹ As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. ¹⁰ When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying. ¹¹ When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, "What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" ¹² A man who lived there answered, "And who is their father?" So it became a saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" ¹³ After Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place.

- Following Saul's private anointing as king, as he left Samuel to return to his home, the Holy Spirit came upon him and changed his heart just as Samuel had predicted it would (see 1 Samuel 10:1-8). Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Saul became a different person than he had been before. Later in the story, the Holy Spirit will depart from Saul and he will revert to the person he was before the spirit came upon him. The change in Saul was visible to those who knew him. He was different than he had been before.
- It was predicted by Samuel that Saul would meet a company of prophets as he approached Gibeah (see 1 Samuel 10:5-7). This happened. Saul joined the prophets in prophesying, declaring the word of the Lord. Those who saw this realized that something was different with Saul. Perhaps they were

surprised to see the son of one of Israel's prominent families acting like a charismatic, Holy Ghost filled, ecstatic. They asked, among themselves, what this meant. As there was no clear answer to the question, a saying developed among the people, "Is Saul to be counted among the prophets?"

- Saul stopped prophesying and went to the high place at Gibeah to worship God.

Verses 14-16

¹⁴ Now Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where have you been?" "Looking for the donkeys," he said. "But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel."

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

¹⁶ Saul replied, "He assured us that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.

- When Saul returned home even the members of his family could see he was different. His uncle asked what had happened to him while he had been away.
- Saul told his uncle that he had met Samuel, Israel's Judge, while on his journey. His uncle wanted to know what Samuel had said to Saul. Saul answered his uncle that Saul had told him of the return of Kish's donkeys but did not say anything about the anointing or of kingship.

Verses 17-19

¹⁷ Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah ¹⁸ and said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.' ¹⁹ But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities. And you have said, 'No, appoint a king over us.' So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

- Samuel called the people of Israel to assemble before the Lord at Mizpah. When they had gathered there, he told them that God, whom they had rejected as their King, was now going to appoint a man to serve as their king.
- Samuel told them to present themselves by tribe and clan to God. Through the casting of lots, God would show them the person among them that He had chosen to be their king. Even in rejecting God as their king, Israel was

forced to acknowledge the sovereignty of God. He would show them who their first human king would be.

Verses 20-22

²⁰ When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. ²¹ Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was taken. Finally Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. ²² So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies."

- As things unfolded by the casting of lots, God revealed that Saul was to be Israel's king.
- But when his name was called, Saul could not be found. YHWH revealed to them that Saul was hiding among the baggage.

Verses 23-24

²³ They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. ²⁴ Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

- Saul was brought into the meeting. Samuel declared before the people that Saul was the one chosen by God to be Israel's first king.
- The people's shout indicated their acceptance of God's choice.

Verse 25

²⁵ Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people to go to their own homes.

- Before dismissing the assembly, Samuel wrote down the rules and privileges related to monarchy. He laid these before YHWH and the people. In this way, Israel was formally informed about what to expect from having a human king.

Verses 26-27

²⁶ Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. ²⁷ But some scoundrels said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.

- Like the rest of Israel, Saul, now Israel's king, went home. Nothing yet changed. All waited on the timing of God.
- Saul was accompanied by the men whose hearts God had touched to establish the government under Saul.
- But other men did not support the kingship of Saul. Though it was the declared will of God through the prophet and was confirmed with various signs, these men had no confidence in Saul, the person God had chosen to be Israel's king. They showed Saul no loyalty. They gave him no respect but were contemptuous of him. Saul took note of who these persons were, but did nothing about it at the time.

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