

SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL AS KING

1 Samuel 9:1-12:25

Key Verse: 11:6

"When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger."

Today's passage tells us how Samuel meets Saul and anoints him as king of Israel. We can learn here what type of person Saul was, and what kind of servant of God Samuel was all his life.

I. Saul made king (9:1-11:15)

First, daddy's boy Saul. Saul was a son of Kish, a Benjamite, "an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites--a head taller than any of the others." (9:2) One day, the donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish were lost. Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys." As soon as his father told him to look for the donkeys, Saul lost no time. He immediately began to run to look for the donkeys in obedience to his father's order. First he went to the hill country of Ephraim and looked around here and there. But he did not find them. So he ran to the area around Shalisha, but he did not find them there either. Next he went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. He was tired. But Saul pushed himself and went to the territory of Benjamin, but he did not find

them. When he reached the district of Zuph, Saul realized that he had gone too far. He also realized that his father was now more concerned about him than the donkeys. So he said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let's go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us." This reminds us of the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." (Ex20:12) This also reminds us of Ephesians 6:1, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Saul was not rebellious or crooked. He did not take his father's love for granted. He honored and obeyed his father out of his love and respect toward his father. In short, he was a daddy's boy. (1-5)

Second, Saul met Samuel. (6-27) Formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, "Come, let us go to the seer," because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.(9:9) So the servant urged Saul to go to the prophet, wishing that the prophet would tell them what way to take. Saul agreed. (9:8-10) So they went up to the town, and as they were entering it, there was Samuel coming toward them on his way up to the high place. Many Chinese philosophers think chance governs all. But that is not true. The Bible tells us that there is always the providence of God, through which men come to recognize God as God. "Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel: 'About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.' When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, 'This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.'" (15-17) "Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, 'Would you please tell me where the seer's house is?'" (18) "'I am the seer,' Samuel replied." (19a) In this

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way, Saul met Samuel. After meeting him, he had to live as a servant of God instead of as a daddy's errand boy.

Third, humanly humble Saul. (9:20-27) Samuel said to Saul, "As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father's family?" (20) It was a suggestion that Saul would not be a daddy's boy anymore, but be king of Israel. At his words, Saul was startled and said, "But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?" (21) He was humanly humble. He looked gorgeous. He was a head taller than all others. But he thought he was a small one. He seemingly could be trained to be a good shepherd and leader. But human qualities are not enough to be a true leader. To become a spiritual leader, every man must be tested. In addition, the leader of God's people must have spiritual training so that he may not do what he wants, but do what God wants.

Fourth, Samuel anointed Saul privately. Anointing was God's commissioning to kingship. Now it remained for Saul to accept the kingship as God's mission for him, and it remained for the people to accept him as their king. After anointing him, Samuel told Saul in detail about some events that would occur on the way home.

What was the first sign that had occurred to Saul? Look at 10:6. "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with

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them; and you will be changed into a different person." The first sign of God was the coming of the Spirit of God on Saul. When the Spirit of God came on him, he became a different person. In the past, Saul probably listened to whatever his daddy said, but he never listened to others. But after the coming of the Spirit of God, he listened to Samuel when Samuel said, "You must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do." (10:8)

The second sign was that God changed Saul's heart. Probably Saul had an ordinary man's mentality; he wanted to be nice to everyone and himself so that as a result, he might enjoy bits and pieces of pleasures and conveniences. But God changed his heart; God gave him a big heart. God changed him from a goodminded man to a man of heart.

The third sign that had happened to Saul was that he became one of the prophets. In the Bible, prophets are known as those who delivered the word of God to their people. Samuel was a prophet at Shiloh; he gave the word of God to his people. The prophet Nathan delivered the message of God to King David when he had committed sin against God by committing adultery. But the most prominent prophets might be the prophet Elijah and John the Baptist. In view of the Bible, every Christian is potentially a prophet. Acts 2:18 says, "Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy." One can become a prophet when the spirit and power of God comes to him. On the other hand, one can become a liar when evil spirits come into his heart.

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What happened to Saul next? Look at 10:10. "When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying." Saul joined in their prophesying. What a sight! "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?'" (11) They thought Saul was a burdensome and bashful boy. But he was prophesying among the prophets. They could not believe their eyes, even though they had seen it with their own eyes. So it became a joke, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Nevertheless, we learn here that the people of God must receive the power of God so that we may have at least ten years of prophetic vision and spiritual discernment.

Fourth, Samuel establishes Saul as king officially. "Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah 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." But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, "No, set a king over us." 'So now present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and clans.'" (17-19) When Samuel brought the tribes of Israel near, first the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Among the tribe of Benjamin, Matri's clan was chosen. Finally, Saul was chosen. So they had tried hard to find him. But no one could even find him. When they prayed, the Lord answered, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage." They ran and brought him out, and he stood among the people. He was a head taller than any of the others. Samuel said to all the people, "Do you

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see the man the Lord has chosen?" Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!" After the official ordination, "Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched." (26)

Fifth, Saul became a courageous soldier. Saul was officially established as king. But he did not act like a king. He still plowed his father's oxen. He seemed to be the last person to be courageous. But when the power of God came upon him, he was changed from a daddy's boy to a courageous commander general. When the Ammonites besieged Jabesh, the men of Jabesh were powerless to defend themselves against the militant, sadistic Ammonites. They could not but surrender.

Israel was a loose confederation of tribes; they didn't know how to help each other. When the people of Israel heard about Jabesh, they wept in helpless rage. But when Saul heard, he burned with anger when the Spirit of God came on him. "He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, 'This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.' Then the terror of the Lord fell on the people, and they turned out as one man." (7) It was the Spirit of God that made him fearless and that gave him courageous leadership. So Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." Saul summoned Israel in a dramatic way to follow him to battle; the terror of the Lord fell on them all and they gathered as one man, fought and completely defeated the Ammonites.

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II. Samuel's farewell speech (12:1-25)

First, "I led you as a servant of God." (12:1,2) Look at verse 1. "Samuel said to all Israel, 'I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you.'" It was a sin to ask for a king, for God was their King. Samuel knew that it was rejection of his leadership, even though he had served them. Also, it was a rejection of God, for God was their King and they were his chosen people. (8:6-9) Samuel was very unhappy about their asking for a king. But Samuel appointed a king over them in response to God's command. Here Samuel is saying to them that he was a leader of his nation as a servant of God who had led his people as God wanted him to do, not as he had wanted to do.

Second, "Whose donkey have I taken?" (3-5) Here Samuel testifies about himself that he had been a servant of God who had lived a pure and sanctified life as God's chosen servant. Samuel had not used means of political deception, nor did he steal God's money for his own future security like many other worldly politicians. He had lived a pure and poor life as our Lord Jesus did. Samuel's life of faith reminds us of 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you, through his poverty, might become rich." Also, Samuel's life of faith draws us to remember Jesus' words in John 17:19, "For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified." Here we learn that Samuel loved God and his people more than donkeys. He was clear he was a chosen servant of God and a man of principle based on God's words.

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Third, Samuel reminded them of God's immeasurable grace upon them. Look at verse 6. "Then Samuel said to the people, 'It is the Lord who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your forefathers up out of Egypt.'" God so loved the world that he decided to deliver his people Israel. God chose Moses as the deliverer of his people after 80 years of humbleness training. Under the leadership of Moses, the people of Israel overcame their fear and made the historical event of the Exodus. By faith the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea as on dry land. (Heb11:29) By faith the people of Israel conquered the invincible fortress of Jericho. But their victories came from God. God chose Moses to be their leader. In short, God delivered them with a high purpose. Exodus 19:4-6a says, "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." We learn that not forgetting God's grace is the hardest thing to do. Samuel urged them in verses 14,15, "If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God--good! But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers."

Fourth, Samuel, a man of prayer. (16-25) Samuel showed a sign of the thunder of the earth trembling so that they might know that what he said was true. (16-20) Finally, Samuel told them not to be afraid, even though they had done all kinds of evil, and to serve the Lord with all their hearts. "For the sake of his

great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own." (22)

Samuel had done his best to help his people seek God. But they did not listen to him. Rather, they did what they wanted to do instead of what God wanted them to do. Samuel came to realize that he was not able to change even one man's heart. In his distress, Samuel came to realize that God can do everything according to his plan. Finally he realized that he could be a prayer servant for his people. He firmly decided to be their prayer servant, remember God's answer to their prayers. So Samuel said in verse 23, "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right." Here we learn that prayer is not one of the potent weapons, but the only weapon for all Christian leaders. Therefore, instead of getting upset when our sheep become more and more obstinate, we should not sin against the Lord by failing to pray for them. We should not help our sheep psychologically. We must listen to all their complaints, and thus embrace them and give one word of God to them, and pray together based on that word.

In this passage we learn how Samuel had done his best to lead his people to repentance. He also established Saul as king of Israel in obedience to God's instructions, despite his dislike to do so.