

THE ANOINTING OF SAUL AS KING

PART ONE – THE PRIVATE ANOINTING

Introduction:

1. In chapter 8, we learned that the children of Israel rebelled against God by desiring a king like the nations around them.
2. Chapters 9 and 10 record for us the selection and anointing of Saul as the first King of Israel.
3. Thus begins the transition of Israel from a nation of tribes to a kingdom.

- I. The Introduction of Saul (9:1-5)
 - A. We are introduced to Saul in the same way we were introduced to Samuel – through his father (cf. 1:1).
 - B. Saul was the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin.
 1. He was known as a mighty man of power, meaning he was a man of great wealth and influence (cf. Ruth 2:1).
 2. Later, Saul would claim to be from the least of all the families in Benjamin, but this was just a form of humility (9:21).
 - C. Some things can be known about Saul at the time he was chosen to be king.
 1. At this time, Saul's son Jonathan was mature enough to lead in battle (13:2).
 2. Thus, Saul was already married to Ahinoam (14:50).
 3. Together they had six children – 4 sons and two daughters (14:49; 1 Chronicles 8:33).
 4. At this time, Eshbaal (also known as Ishbosheth [2 Sam. 2:8]) was not yet born.
 5. At some point in time, Saul took Rizpah for a concubine and she bore him two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 3:7; 21:8).
 6. Yet, Saul was still considered a young man (9:2).
 7. Thus, he was probably around 40 years old when chosen as king.
 8. Saul's name means "asked" or "asked for."
 - a. In contrast, Samuel's name means "asked of God" or "God heard."
 - b. It is possible that Saul's name means "beggar" or "one begged for."
 - c. Certainly, the nation had begged for a king.
 - D. The record specifically emphasizes the physical characteristics of Saul.
 1. He was a "choice young man" – meaning, 'the pick of the litter' or 'the cream of the crop' (cf. 1 Chron. 19:10; 2 Chron. 25:5).
 2. He was called "goodly" – meaning, "pleasant to the senses."
 3. In fact, there was no one more handsome than Saul.
 4. He was tall – head and shoulders above everyone else.
 5. Quite literally, Saul was tall, dark, and handsome.
 6. From a physical, human perspective, Saul looked like the perfect king.
 - E. We first see Saul in action as he obeys his father's instructions to seek for a group of donkeys that had gotten lost.
 - F. Saul and his servant searched thoroughly for the donkeys for three days (vs. 20), but they could not be found.
 - G. Thus, he determined to return home before his father began to worry about him. *{There is an important lesson about God's providence in this passage.}*

- II. The Journey to Samuel (9:6-14)
- A. Saul's servant suggested to him that they visit the man of God in the city before the return home to Gibeah (cf. 10:26).
 - 1. This seems to indicate that they were near Ramah, Samuel's home, and only about three miles from Gibeah, Saul's home.
 - a. However, it is possible that they were near an unnamed town that Samuel was visiting for the purpose of offering sacrifice.
 - b. Keil & Delitzsch suggest that it was somewhere southwest of Bethlehem.
 - 2. Note this important point – Saul lived less than 5 miles from Samuel, yet he did not know of the prophet of God!
 - 3. While Saul and his family make an imposing impression physically, they do not appear to be spiritual at all.
 - B. Thankfully, Saul's servant knew of Samuel's reputation as a prophet and man of God – although he did not call him by name.
 - C. Still, their motivation in visiting Samuel is purely physical – since he is a prophet of God, maybe he could tell them where to find the lost donkeys.
 - D. After deciding on a gift to give the prophet, they went into the city.
 - E. Apparently it was near sundown when they approached the city, for the maidens were going out to draw water (cf. Gen. 24:11).
 - F. Saul asked them, "Is the seer here?"
 - G. They informed him that Samuel was there and that he was just in time to meet him before the beginning of the feasting.
 - H. As they came into the city, they met Samuel on his way to the high place (*bamah*) to bless the sacrifice. {*Again, we see the providence of God at work.*}
- III. The Private Anointing of Saul (9:15 – 10:1)
- A. We learn that God had foretold Samuel of Saul's coming a day earlier.
 - B. God had also revealed that Saul was to be anointed king over Israel.
 - C. When Samuel first viewed Saul, God spoke to him again – informing that Saul was the man to be king.
 - D. Saul, who had no knowledge of Samuel, asked to be directed to the prophet's house.
 - E. Samuel replied, "I am the seer," and invited Saul to the feast upon the high place.
 - F. Samuel proved his position as a prophet by telling Saul that the lost donkeys had been found.
 - G. Then, turning from something of low estate (donkeys) to Saul's higher purpose, Samuel informs him that all the desire of Israel is upon Saul.
 - 1. The idea is that Saul would be the one to fulfill the desire of Israel for a king.
 - 2. He met their standards as a king like all the nations around them.
 - 3. Thus, Samuel is telling Saul that he will be king.
 - H. Saul replies with humility and, perhaps, some doubt.
 - 1. Benjamin was one of the smallest tribes.
 - 2. In Judges 20, the men of Benjamin were reduced from 26,700 to 1,600 soldiers in battle against the other tribes.
 - 3. In the end, only 600 escaped by hiding at the rock called Rimmon.

1 Samuel 9:1 – 10:27

- I. Samuel gave him the chief seat at the feast and provided him a select portion of the sacrifice to eat.
 - 1. The right shoulder was the priest's portion of the peace offering (Leviticus 7:32-34; 10:14).
 - 2. So, Saul seems to have been given the left shoulder of the animal – a large and generous portion.
 - 3. Or, it may be that Samuel gave his portion to Saul, bestowing an even greater honor upon him.
 - 4. Either way, Samuel's point was to prove that he had foreseen Saul's coming and prepared for him in advance.
- J. Early the next morning, Samuel walked with Saul as he began his journey from the town back to his home.
- K. After asking Saul's servant to go on before them, Samuel anointed Saul with oil and kissed him – signifying that he was chosen to be the king of Israel.

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PART TWO – THE PUBLIC ANOINTING

- I. The Confirmation of God (10:2-13)
 - A. After privately anointing him as king, Samuel told Saul of three things that would happen to him to serve as signs from God.
 - 1. First, he would meet two men by Rachael's grave (near Bethlehem) who would speak to him of the lost donkeys.
 - 2. Second, in the plain (literally, come to the oak) of Tabor, he would meet three men who would give him two loaves of bread.
 - 3. Finally, he would meet a group of prophets and begin prophesying with them.
 - B. Each of these predictions was significant.
 - 1. Such detail was given that it was not possible that these were mere guesses.
 - 2. "Dr. Hugh Ross, an astrophysicist from the University of Toronto ... [stated that] the probability of the events mentioned in 1 Samuel 10:2-6 happening in sequence and as Samuel predicted would be one in eight million." - Cyril J. Barber
 - 3. The message of the first sign was that God could handle Saul's problems. {*This was a lesson he needed to learn in order to serve faithfully as king. Sadly, Saul would soon forget it.*}
 - 4. The message of the second sign was that God could supply Saul's needs. {*This was another important lesson that Saul would soon forget.*}
 - 5. The message of the third sign was that God could empower Saul for his service. {*Again, sadly, Saul would forget this vital truth.*}
 - C. The first two signs are only mentioned in the text, while the third is described in more detail.
 - D. The "hill of God" is actually Gibeah, Saul's hometown.
 - 1. In Gibeah, the Philistines had once had an outpost.
 - 2. Also, there was a "high place" there – much like the one where Samuel and Saul had just feasted.

1 Samuel 9:1 – 10:27

- E. Coming down from the high place in Gibeah would be a band of prophets – apparently preceded by others who were playing musical instruments.
 - F. As this group of prophets prophesied, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul and he began to prophesy with them.
 - 1. This phrase was used of an empowering of a person by the Holy Spirit (cf. Judges 14:19; 15:14).
 - 2. In this context, the power given was the ability to prophesy (cf. Numbers 11:25).
 - 3. It is essential to understand that Saul would be “turned into another man.”
 - a. This does not mean that God would take over and control Saul against his will.
 - b. It does not mean that Saul would become a “holy-roller.”
 - c. It means that when Saul recognized that God could speak and work through him, he would have a change of heart toward God and spiritual things in general.
 - H. Notice that all those who had known Saul previously (some for his whole life) were stunned that he was prophesying.
 - 1. This was entirely out of character for a worldly man like Saul.
 - 2. They even created a proverb about the situation – “Is Saul also among the prophets?”
 - 3. They could not imagine who had allowed Saul to join a group of prophets.
 - I. In every way, God confirmed His choice of Saul as king of Israel and proved to him that He would help him lead the nation.
 - J. *{Notice that in the midst of his instructions to Saul, Samuel speaks to him of going down to Gilgal. This event will be picked up in chapter 13.}*
- II. The Silence of Saul (10:14-16)
- A. When questioned by his uncle, Saul demonstrates wisdom and humility by not bragging about his being chosen as king.
 - B. Again, we are given a glimpse of some of Saul’s good characteristics before we learn of his many faults.
- III. The Public Anointing of Saul (10:17-27)
- A. Finally, Samuel called the nation together at Mizpeh.
 - B. After reminding them of all that God had done for them, Samuel made sure they understood that their desire for a king was a rejection of God.
 - C. Even though they had rejected God, He would appoint them a king.
 - D. They were divided by tribes, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.
 - E. Out of the tribe of Benjamin, the family of Matri was chosen.
 - F. Out of the family of Matri, Saul was chosen – but he could not be found.
 - G. The Lord informed them that Saul was hiding “among the stuff.”
 - 1. This was probably not out of humility.
 - 2. Saul was hiding out of fear.
 - H. When the people found him and brought him forward, they were pleased with his physical stature.
 - I. Samuel declared that Saul was chosen by God and the people shouted, “God save the King!”
 - J. We are left with a picture of early division in Saul’s kingdom – some followed him home, but others despised him.