

## Saul is Anointed as the First King of Israel

### 1 Samuel 10

*"Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: "Is it not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance. <sup>2</sup> When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"'" <sup>3</sup> Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. <sup>4</sup> And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. <sup>5</sup> After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. <sup>6</sup> Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. <sup>7</sup> And let it be, when these signs come to you, that you do as the occasion demands; for God is with you. <sup>8</sup> You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."*

<sup>9</sup> So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. <sup>10</sup> When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. <sup>11</sup> And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" <sup>12</sup> Then a man from there answered and said, "But who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" <sup>13</sup> And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place.

<sup>14</sup> Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?" So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that they were nowhere to be found, we went to Samuel."

<sup>15</sup> And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you."

<sup>16</sup> So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said. <sup>17</sup> Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, <sup>18</sup> and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and

*delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you. ' <sup>19</sup> But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans. "<sup>[b]</sup>*

*<sup>20</sup> And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. <sup>21</sup> When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. <sup>22</sup> Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?"*

*And the LORD answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment."*

*<sup>23</sup> So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. <sup>24</sup> And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?"*

*So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"*

*<sup>25</sup> Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, 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. <sup>26</sup> And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched. <sup>27</sup> But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.*

## **Background Notes**

In 1 Samuel 9 God brought Saul into contact with the prophet Samuel through a set of ordinary, mundane circumstances. From the human perspective, Saul was looking for lost donkeys and had no idea that he would be anointed as the first king of Israel. From the divine perspective, however, God sent Saul to Samuel to be anointed as king. In chapter 10, Samuel kissed Saul in recognition that he was God's chosen leader and anointed him with olive oil. In the Old Testament, anointing with oil was a symbol that the person was set apart for divine service. The oil is a picture of the work of the Holy Spirit in setting a believer apart for divine service.

The big question here, of course, is whether or not Saul was a true believer. In chapter 9, Saul didn't even know about Samuel until his servant told him, and that's an indication that Saul was not very interested in the things of God. But 1 Samuel 10:6



says that Saul would be changed, and verse 9 says that God changed his heart -- and he prophesied!

However, just because Saul prophesied when the Spirit of God came upon him doesn't mean that he was a true believer. The Holy Spirit certainly didn't indwell Saul, as He indwells believers today. In Numbers 24 we read that the spirit of the Lord came upon Balaam, and Balaam prophesied -- but Balaam was certainly not a believer! He was a false prophet, a "diviner." On the other hand, would God choose an unbeliever as the first king over His people? And Samuel told Saul, "*God is with you*" (v7). Back and forth the argument goes. What's the answer? We can't say for sure. (You knew I was going to cop-out on this, right?) I personally tend to think that Saul was a true believer, but certainly not a spiritual believer.

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. God will show His people the paths they should follow.**

God revealed to Samuel the exact sequence of the events that would take place in Saul's travels, and Samuel communicated this to Saul. Thus Saul was confirmed in his path with divine signs. "*So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day*" (v9). So God showed Saul the path that he should follow. God led Saul to meet the prophets of God, and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily and he prophesied before the Lord. Now if God did this to lead Saul, who may not have been a true believer, certainly He can and will do this for His people today.

Notice that God gave Saul three signs through the prophet Samuel:

- a. Two men would meet him at Rachel's tomb and tell him that the lost donkeys had been found (v2). By the way, Rachel's tomb is still there today. It's a well-known site near Bethlehem.
- b. Three men would meet Saul at the oak of Tabor. They would be carrying three young goats, three loaves of bread, and a jug of wine, and they would give him two loaves of bread (v3-4).



- c. Then when Saul met a group of prophets carrying musical instruments, the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him, and he would prophesy. These prophets were most likely being trained for ministry, much like seminary students today, at a school of the prophets that Samuel started. This was another ministry of Samuel the prophet.

God gave three specific signs that would confirm Saul's direction and path. Notice that these signs were not shooting stars, or voices from heaven, but normal events (except when Saul prophesied). Notice that these signs guided Saul by **confirming** the direction he was going. This is generally the way the Lord leads His people today – not with shooting stars, or voices from heaven, but through **normal events** that **confirm** we're moving in the right direction as we seek to walk with the Lord, and serve Him, and follow His plan for our lives. God will **confirm** our path -- that's the key!

We could divide the signs that God gave Saul into three different categories:  
a. **Circumstances** - the donkeys had been found. b. **Needs supplied** - Saul was given bread. c. **Counsel of godly believers** - the prophets confirmed Saul's direction. As God's people today, we are involved in making decisions all the time, and we want the Lord's will and not our own will. Those three categories are three ways God can confirm our walk of faith. We should make our decisions in the light of the teaching of God's Word, and using our "sanctified common sense," and (as much as possible) with godly motives -- and no hidden agendas! Then, rather than asking God for a specific sign that **we** have chosen, we can ask God to **confirm** our direction and path with **His** choice of circumstances or provision or godly counsel. God will show His people the paths they should follow.

## **2. God will show His people the leaders they should follow.**

In verses 17-24 Samuel reminded the people that even though they had rejected God's perfect will by wanting a king, God would allow them to have a king, and He would even choose a king for them. God made His choice of Saul as the first king known to the people by the drawing or casting of lots, a method that was often used in Bible days. First of all, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen, then the clan or extended family, and finally the lot fell on Saul, the son of Kish. Saul was humbly hiding in the baggage or equipment, but when he was found and



announced, the people acknowledged him as their king by shouting, "Long live the king!" So God showed His people the leader that they should follow.

God will show His people the leaders they should follow today as well. Normally we don't cast lots today, because the Holy Spirit indwells the church and every individual believer, and the Spirit will show His people the leaders they should follow. Elders and church leaders should not be chosen by popular vote; God raises up His chosen leaders, and they will be known and shown by the work that they're doing. God will guide us to the leaders **He** has chosen, and it's the responsibility of God's people to recognize the leaders that God has raised up. They will be easy to identify by the work of the Lord that they're already doing. God will show His people the leaders to follow.

### **Practical application**

#### **Expect support and opposition if you are God's chosen leader.**

Samuel wrote up a "policies and operations manual" for the new monarchy, and placed it before the Lord (v25), probably with the Ark of the Covenant. This book undoubtedly included the instructions for future kings of Israel that is found in Deuteronomy 17. Meanwhile, Saul went to his home in Gibeah, which would become the capital city for Israel. Even though some men despised and opposed Saul, God moved some valiant men to support King Saul at Gibeah.

This is the way it is in leadership. Even when you're doing the right thing, there will always be opposition along with support. So if God has called you to be a spiritual leader in the church or in some ministry, don't quit just because there's opposition! Expect it! The enemy sends opposition, but God sends the needed support. Expect both opposition and support if you're God's chosen leader.