

1 Samuel (Sh'mu'el Alef)

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Chapter 9

1 Now there was a man of Benjamin (Binyamin), whose name was Kish,¹ the son of Abiel (Avi'el), the son of Zeror (Tz'ror), the son of Bechorath (B'khorat), the son of Aphiah (Afiach), a son of Jemini (Binyamin), a mighty man of power.

2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul Sha'ul,² a handsome young man. Among the sons of Israel there was not a nicer³ person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.⁴

¹ H7027

קיש

qiysh
keesh

From H6983; a **bow**; Kish, the name of five Israelites: - Kish.

H6983

קש

qo^ˆsh
koshe

A primitive root; **to bend**; used only as denominative for H3369, **to set a trap**: - lay a snare.

² H7586

שאול

sha^ˆ'u^ˆl
shaw-ool'

Passive participle of H7592; **asked**; Shaul, the name of an Edomite and two Israelites: - Saul, Shaul.

Kish asked for a son, and Israel asked for a king.

³ H2896

טוב

t^ˆ o^ˆ b
tobe

From H2895; **good** (as an adjective) in the widest sense; used likewise as a noun, both in the masculine and the feminine, the singular and the plural (good, a good or good thing, a good man or woman; the good, goods or good things, good men or women), also as an adverb (well): - beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful, at ease, X fair (word), (be in) favour, fine, glad, good (deed, -lier, liest, -ly, -ness, -s), graciously, joyful, kindly, kindness, liketh (best), loving, merry, X most, pleasant, + pleaseth, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare, (be) well ([-favoured]).

3 ¶ And the she asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost.⁵ And Kish said to Saul, his son, Take now one of the slaves with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.⁶

4 And he passed through Mount Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalisha (Shalishah), but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shalim (Sha'alim), and they were not there, and he passed through the land of Jemini, but they did not find them.

5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph (Tzuf), 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 honorable man;⁷ all that he says surely comes to pass; now let us go there; peradventure he can show us our way that we should go.

7 Then Saul replied unto his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread is spent in our vessels, and we have nothing to present unto the man of God. What do we have?

8 And the servant answered Saul again and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver; this will I give to the man of God to tell us our way.⁸

9 (Beforetime in Israel when anyone went to enquire of God, he spoke thus, Come, and let us go to the seer, for he that is now called a Prophet was called a Seer⁹ before.)

10 Then Saul said to his servant, Well said; come, let us go.¹⁰ So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

Saul was tall, handsome, well-groomed, generous, and he had charm. David Stern translates this passage in the *Complete Jewish Bible* to mean that Saul was a man of substance, and he was courageous. He went through some serious personality changes, after taking on the burden of being king.

⁴ I imagine Saul as, at least, seven feet tall. The heroes of old were giants, so Middle Eastern people were very impressed with height. Saul's appearance appealed to the people's flesh. They wanted to have a king that they were proud of for his height, his beauty, his intelligence, his military skill, and his manners. A person can have all that, but not have a heart for God and faith in His power and His goodness.

⁵ What appeared to be a nuisance was God setting things up to bring Saul to Samuel. Things that appear to be a nuisance can actually be a stepping stone to promotion, putting us in the right place at the right time. God could have told Samuel to go to Saul's town, and pointed him out, but He spared Samuel the trouble of travelling, and He wanted the elders who were in Ramah to see Saul, and wonder why Samuel singled him out for honour.

⁶ Kish gave this interesting job to his son, who had the privilege of being spared the heavy work. It was also a job of honour, trusting Saul to stick to the job, rather than using time away from home to lallygag, as a servant might have done, if they were on their own. Saul cared about their wealth, and he had shown himself able to deal with responsibility.

⁷ What a treasure, to be known as an honourable man. This was not a reputation built by publicity; it was Samuel's track record.

⁸ Saul must have liked this slave, to have chosen him to help him find the asses, and appears that the slave liked Saul, as well. Though he was a slave, he took note of God's ways and God's servant, the prophet Samuel, and he was willing to give, or, at least, lend Saul the little money, so that he would not be too ashamed to ask Samuel about his father's lost property.

⁹ Seers saw visions, but the term "prophet" probably encompassed those who saw visions, and also those who may have just had an inner knowing about things, without seeing visions.

¹⁰ One of Saul's leadership qualities was that he was willing to listen to those of lesser rank, even a slave. He recognized and appreciated intelligence, and was willing to act on other people's ideas, as well as to give them

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 today to the city, for there is a sacrifice of the people today in the high place.

13 As soon as you are come into the city, ye shall straightway find him before he goes up to the high place to eat, for the people will not eat until he comes because he must bless the sacrifice, and afterwards those that are invited eat. Now therefore go 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 before them to go up to the high place.

15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear¹¹ a day before Saul came, saying,

16 Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince 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.¹²

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spoke to thee of! This same shall reign over my people.¹³

18 ¶ Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.¹⁴

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 today, and tomorrow I will let thee go and will tell thee all that is in thy heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, take no care for 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, Peradventure am I not of Jemini, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And is my family not the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why, therefore, dost thou speak so to me?

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the banquet chamber¹⁵ and made them sit at the head¹⁶ among those that were invited, which were about thirty persons.¹⁷

credit for their ideas, as the record of this story attests. He did not refrain from telling Samuel that it was his salve's idea that they should seek him out.

¹¹ God spoke to him audibly. This was not merely an inner knowing. It should be normal for Christians to clearly hear God like this. As Andrew Wommack says, "If your life isn't supernatural, it's superficial."

¹² In spite of the rebellion against Him of those who wanted a king, God honoured those who honoured Him and prayed for their nation, by giving them a king who would be valiant in battle and save them from their enemies. Though many in a nation go astray, God will show it mercy for the sake of those who live there who love Him.

¹³ Just to look at Saul, Samuel must have thought that God had chosen the very best of His people to be the king, and he still had that mindset of looking on the outward appearance when he went to anoint David to be the king.

¹⁴ Samuel was Israel's chief Judge, but he did not try to attract attention to himself. Saul didn't know him from any other man. He did not have a retinue when he was at home.

¹⁵ Though Samuel's parents had been only moderately well off, and he was not likely to have inherited the double portion of the eldest son, Samuel was well looked after by the Israelites because of his position. He had a house that was large enough to entertain many people, and he had servants to attend to the needs of his family and his guests. His sons would likewise have had their needs supplied adequately, if not luxuriously, but they wanted luxury, so they turned aside after greed, taking bribes to pervert judgment.

23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it aside.¹⁸

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 was reserved!¹⁹ Set it before thee and eat because for this time it has been kept for thee, since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul ate with Samuel that day.²⁰

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he spoke with Saul upon the top of the house.²¹

26 And they arose early about dawn, and Samuel called Saul, who was on the top of the house, saying, Rise up that I may send thee away.²² 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 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 declare thee the word of God.

¹⁶ Saul must have been bewildered at all the attention and honour that Samuel was giving him. The servant would have been wondering, too, what this was all about. He possibly gave himself credit later on for being the one who suggested that they go to Samuel in the first place.

¹⁷ These were probably key people who had much influence with the Israelites. Samuel wanted them to be with him at the feast, because he knew that the Lord was going to show him who would be the king. Some of them may have wondered if Samuel invited them because they were supposed to be the king.

¹⁸ The choicest cut of meat, such as what one would serve to a king.

¹⁹ Saul possibly thought of when his ancestor Benjamin was honoured with the worthy portions in Joseph's house in Egypt.

²⁰ Samuel set Saul in a place of honour, to bring him to people's attention, so that it would be easier for them to accept him as their king when he later made the announcement.

²¹ Samuel wanted to get a feel for himself of what kind of man this was whom God had chosen to be the king.

²² Samuel probably wanted to send Saul away early before his family members and the townspeople could start asking Saul questions, which he was not supposed to answer at that time.