

1 Samuel Chapter 10

1 Samuel 10:1 "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured [it] upon his head, and kissed him, and said, [Is it] not because the LORD hath anointed thee [to be] captain over his inheritance?"

Samuel's anointing of Saul held spiritual significance. By it the king was set apart for service as God's earthly representative on the throne of Israel. Negative critics have imagined a contradiction between Saul's anointing here (and the reports at verses 17-24 and 11:14-15). Actually, the three accounts are supplementary, Saul's private anointing by God through His prophet being reported here, the public identification of Saul through the casting of lots being detailed (in verses 17-24), and the formal proclamation of Saul's kingship being recorded (in 11:14-15). Because Israel had no precedent of royal protocol and because interests were strongly divided in the country (compare verses 27, 11:12-13), care and time were needed for both the selection and the confirmation of Saul's leadership (compare the note on 11:1).

"His inheritance": The inheritance was God's nation, Israel, in the sense that she uniquely belonged to Him (Deut. 40; 9:26).

This vial of oil was the same kind of oil that was used to anoint the priests to the service of the LORD. Saul was anointed into this office of king by the LORD Himself, even though Samuel poured the oil. The kiss was a seal of approval by Samuel. It was honoring Saul as king. Saul knew that everyone had great respect for Samuel. Saul was greatly honored that Samuel would anoint him and kiss him to show his loyalty to Saul.

Verses 2-6: As with Moses (Exodus 4:3-9) and Gideon (Judges 6:36-40), "God" graciously gave confirmation of His will for Saul by means of outward signs. All three took place on the same day (verse 9).

1 Samuel 10:2 "When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulcher in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?"

"Zelzah": Only mentioned here. Probably near Ramah, located between Beth-el and Bethlehem, where Rachel died (Gen. 35:19; 48:7).

Samuel tells Saul this in advance, so Saul will believe he is called of God to be king. The message from the two men will also relieve Saul that his father's asses are found. It will be sad news that his father is sorrowing for him to return home. Rachel's sepulcher is just out of Bethlehem.

1 Samuel 10:3 "Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:"

“Tabor”’: This is not the far-distant Mt. Tabor, but a location unknown, probably near Beth-el.

1 Samuel 10:4 "And they will salute thee, and give thee two [loaves] of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands."

The “loaves of bread” were probably intended for the sacrificial meal. This was the second time Saul received the sacred bread, an honor that corroborated his divine anointing.

This will be another sign from the LORD, that Saul has been called as king. I am sure that Saul is still wondering if the LORD really did call him. These strange things happening to him spontaneously will certainly make him believe it is true. This will happen in the vicinity of Beth-el. These men, who meet Saul, will be total strangers. The fact that they give him two loaves of bread that were intended for their offering in Beth-el, should verify what has happened to him is real.

1 Samuel 10:5 "After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where [is] the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:"

“Garrison of the Philistines”’: Most likely the garrison in Geba in Benjamin, about 5 miles north of Jerusalem.

“A company of prophets”’: Literally “sons of the prophets.” They were young men being trained by Samuel for the prophetic ministry (see 19:18-20).

“Prophesy”’: The prophet, as God’s messenger, declared the Word of the Lord (2 Sam. 7:5; 12:1), sometimes accompanied by music (1 Chron. 25:1). Here, “prophesy” connotes praising God and instructing the people with musical accompaniment.

This third thing that happens to him is even more convincing than the first two. This is, probably, at Gibeah. These prophets will be coming down from their place of worship. One of the schools of the prophets, that Samuel had established, was located at Gibeah. This is why there would be so many prophets here. The instruments are with them, so they have been praising God in music. They chanted their prayers and prophesy as well. They will prophesy when they see Saul.

1 Samuel 10:6 "And the spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man."

The coming of “the Spirit of the Lord” upon Saul would equip him to do the tasks for which he had been anointed. See the note on Judges 3:10. The Spirit of the Lord would especially empower a person to serve God’s people (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14).

“Be turned into another man”: With this empowerment by the Holy Spirit, Saul would emerge another man (10:9), equipped in the manner of Gideon and Jephthah for deeds of valor (compare verse 9; Judges 6:34; 11:29).

Saul will receive the gift of prophecy, when the Spirit of the LORD comes upon him. He will be totally different, filled with the Spirit of God. The old flesh man will be gone and he will be a spirit man.

1 Samuel 10:7 "And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, [that] thou do as occasion serve thee; for God [is] with thee."

“Signs”: The 3 signs of verses 2-6:

- (1) The report of the found donkeys;
- (2) The encounter of the 3 men going to Beth-el; and
- (3) The encounter with the prophets.

“Do as occasion serve thee”: Saul was to do what his hand found to do (Eccl. 9:10).

After this happens to Saul, the LORD will direct everything Saul does. Saul's decisions will be in the will of God, after this special anointing comes upon him. He will succeed, because the LORD is with him.

1 Samuel 10:8 "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, [and] to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do."

Samuel gives Saul instructions concerning further “sacrifices” at “Gilgal,” a command he was subsequently to disobey (13:8-10).

“Gilgal”: The town where Saul eventually would be declared king by Samuel (11:14-15), offer sacrifice before the Lord without the prophet Samuel (13:12), and where Samuel slew king Agag (15:33). Gilgal was to the east of Jericho, but west of the Jordan River.

“Burnt offerings ... peace offerings” (see notes on Lev. 1:3-17; 3:1-17).

“Seven days”: The appointed time Saul was to wait for Samuel to come and tell him what to do (see 13:8).

Gilgal is the place where Saul will gather the people for war. Notice, it is Samuel who sacrifices. Samuel is the spiritual leader and Saul is the civil leader of the country. At this meeting at Gilgal, Saul is to stay seven days so Samuel can show him what he is to do.

1 Samuel 10:9 "And it was [so], that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day."

“God gave him another heart”: Literally “God changed him for another heart,” i.e., God prepared Saul for the kingship by having the Holy Spirit come upon him (verse 6).

Although many believe that Saul had a valid conversion experience, the term “another heart” need not be construed as anything more than a divine equipping of Saul with inner abilities for performing the duties of the kingship for which he had been anointed.

God removed the heart of flesh and gave Saul a brand new heart guided by the Spirit of God. No longer was Saul a man of Israel. He was now King of Israel under the anointing of God. His heart was a heart of a king. God had completely changed him. There was no time wasted. The signs that Samuel had told him of, happened that very day.

1 Samuel 10:10 "And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them."

This temporary filling confirmed Saul’s anointing as king.

This is a supernatural anointing of the Spirit of God causing him to prophesy. Saul had not been trained. His prophecy was a gift from God. In this type of prophecy, God speaks through the anointed.

1 Samuel 10:11 "And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What [is] this [that] is come unto the son of Kish? [Is] Saul also among the prophets?"

As there must be many that personally knew him, and were acquainted with him, since Gibeah, the place he was near to, was his native place: saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets. Or praised among them, as the Targum, sung psalms and hymns with them: what is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Someone that was never in the school of the prophets or learned music yet is as dexterous at it as any of them.

"Is Saul also among the prophets?" A husbandman and herdsman that looked after his father's farms, fields, and cattle, and now among the prophets of the Lord, bearing his part with them, and performing it as well as any of them. This was matter of wonder to those who knew his person, family, and education. And so, it was equally matter of admiration that Saul the persecutor, one of the same tribe, should be among the preachers of the Gospel (Acts 9:20).

The people of Israel had great respect for those who prophesied. The school of prophesy, that Samuel started, was where they lived. The people were familiar with prophesy, but they never knew Saul to be a prophet. He had not attended this school. They are amazed to hear him prophesy. Usually your friends and relatives are the last to believe you have been called of God. Saul was no different.

1 Samuel 10:12 "And one of the same place answered and said, But who [is] their father? Therefore it became a proverb, [Is] Saul also among the prophets?"

“Who is their father?” A question asked to find out the identity of the leader of the prophetic band that now included Saul.

“A proverb”: A saying of common occurrence.

Birth has nothing to do with prophecy. A prophet is called of God to be a prophet.

1 Samuel 10:13 "And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place."

After he had spent his fervor in the hymn, and probably ecstatic prayer, Saul, before he went to his home we read, betook himself at once to the high place of Gibeah, whence the sons of the prophets had just come down when he met them on the hill-side. He went there, no doubt, because, conscious of the change that had passed over him, and aware of his new powers, he felt a desire for solitary communing in the quiet of a holy sanctuary with God, who had come so near him.

“He came to the high place”: To return thanks to God for the gift bestowed on him, and for that high honor and dignity he was raised unto, of which he had private knowledge; and to pray God to fit him more and more for government, and to, assist him in it, and help him to discharge his office in a wise and faithful manner.

These young prophets had just come from this high place. Now Saul goes to the high place to worship the LORD in his own way. Saul knows that something has happened to him and he goes to pray and thank God for the honor he has bestowed upon him.

1 Samuel 10:14 "And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that [they were] no where, we came to Samuel."

They had been absent so long a time. This was his father's brother, as the Targum, and so Aquila; whose name was Ner, the father of Abner (1 Samuel 14:50), who met with him at the high place, or found him in the city, in his father's house it may be. Josephus says, Saul went into the house of his kinsman Abner, whom he loved above all his relations, and that it was he that discoursed with Saul, and asked him, the questions before and after related:

“And he said, to seek the asses: he first observes the end of their going, the business they went upon, in which not succeeding, then he answers more directly to the question:

“And when we saw that they were nowhere”: Could not see them, nor find them anywhere, or hear of them where they went:

“We came to Samuel”: At Ramah, to inquire of him, if he could direct us which way to go, and what methods to take, to find the asses.

The uncle this is speaking of is probably Abner, since he is mentioned in that way in other Scriptures. He is inquisitive about what has happened to Saul. He really gets excited when Saul tells him he saw Samuel. It appears that everyone is aware that something special has happened to Saul. It does not mention Saul's father here, but I am sure Saul shared with him what happened to him. Every little detail is not covered in the telling of this.

1 Samuel 10:15 "And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you."

On hearing he had been with Samuel, and perceiving so great an alteration in Saul, perhaps he began to suspect something about the kingdom. That being what everyone was talking of, and expecting every day to hear from Samuel who should be king, according to the Lord's appointment.

"Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you": The earnestness with which he put this question seems to confirm the above conjecture.

The uncle is asking for Saul to go through everything that Samuel said and did.

1 Samuel 10:16 "And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not."

“The matter of the kingdom”: The information Samuel gave Saul about becoming king he did not tell his uncle. This might reflect Saul's humility (compare verse 22).

Saul tells his uncle about the asses, which would glorify Samuel. He does not tell him of being anointed as king of Israel. He really does not tell him anything Samuel said to him, about his call to serve God.

Verses 17-24: (See the note on verse 1).

1 Samuel 10:17 "And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpah;"

“Samuel called the people”: The Lord's choice of Saul was made public at Mizpah, the place of the spiritual revival before Israel's victory over the Philistines (7:5-8).

This seemed to be their favorite place to call them together. They know when Samuel calls them, they will hear from the LORD.

Verses 18-19: "The Lord God of Israel ... delivered you": Despite the past faithfulness of God to His people, they still desired a human king to deliver them from the hands of their enemies.

1 Samuel 10:18 "And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, [and] of them that oppressed you:"

Before proceeding to the election, Samuel again reminds Israel of its folly and ingratitude in their voluntarily rejecting the glorious Eternal King for an earthly sovereign. It was perfectly true that, under the present circumstances of Israel, the establishment of a mortal king was needful for the development of the Hebrew power. But it was none the less true that such a change in the Hebrew constitution would never have been necessary had not the nation forsaken their own Eternal Sovereign. Who in time past had saved them out of far greater perils than any then threatening them. Now a change in the government of Israel was necessary, therefore God gave them their desire. But the change would involve the loss for ever of the higher blessedness for which the people had shown to be utterly unworthy.

The LORD had separated them out as a people, who had no king, except the LORD. He had delivered them from great bondage in Egypt and brought them to their Promised Land. He blessed them beyond all other nations, as long as they stayed faithful to Him, and obeyed His commandments.

1 Samuel 10:19 "And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, [Nay], but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands."

They rejected God as their king by desiring another to be set over them.

"Who himself saved you out of all your adversity and your tribulations": That they had been in at any time in Egypt, in their passage through the wilderness to Canaan, and after they were settled there.

"Ye have said unto him, nay, but set a king over us": They did as good as say God should not be their King, but they would have one set over them like the kings of the nations about them. Samuel reminds them of this their request and resolution to have a king, which they had expressed some time ago, that it might appear to them that this was wholly of their own seeking. The motion came from them, and not from the Lord, nor from Samuel, and therefore, whatever ill consequences might follow, they had no one to blame but themselves.

"Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands": By the heads of their tribes, and by the rulers of the thousands into which their tribes were divided, that it might be known either by Urim and Thummim. Or rather by casting lots, out of which tribe, and out of which thousand, house, and family in it, their king was to be chosen. And by which method as it would clearly appear to be a choice directed by the Lord, so it would prevent all contention and discord among themselves.

In spite of all the wonderful things He had done for them, they have rejected Him as their King. They wanted to be like all the heathen nations around them, and have an earthly king. They are not to say later, they did not know. All the tribes are gathered here at Mizpeh. Each tribe is to come individually and stand before Samuel.

Verses 20-21: In spite of all the Lord had done to confirm Saul's calling, including the three additional signs (in 10:2-7), he apparently was reticent. Those who look to themselves and their own strength will never have the courage to accept the Lord's commissioning. The only antidote to such reticence is total reliance on God.

1 Samuel 10:20 "And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken."

The heads and representatives of them were taken to the place where the lots were cast.

"The tribe of Benjamin was taken": The lot fell upon that tribe for the choice of a king out of it; not the tribe of Reuben, who was the firstborn, nor the tribe of Judah, to whom the kingdom was promised, but the tribe of Benjamin. The least of all the tribes, and which sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, contrary as it were probable, to the expectation of all.

All of the twelve tribes came before Him, and Samuel chose out the little tribe of Benjamin.

1 Samuel 10:21 "When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found."

By the heads of them, to have lots cast for them, out of which of the families the king should be chosen.

"The family of Matri was taken": That is by lot; the lot fell upon that family for the choice of a king out of them: in the account of the families of the tribe of Benjamin (1 Chron. 8:1). No mention is made of this family, or anywhere else, and yet no doubt there was such a family, and Saul was of it. It seems to have its name from the butt or mark arrows were shot at; some of the Benjamites being famous for their skill in darting and slinging, and perhaps this family might be so.

"And Saul the son of Kish was taken": The lot being cast upon the men in the family of Matri, though it is not expressed, fell upon Saul; for though he was not there, as Jarchi observes, the lot fell upon him. For their names were written on a piece of paper, and put into a box, and the prophet put in his hand and took out one, and on that was the name of Saul, and this was the manner of the lot.

"And when they sought him, he could not be found": Because he had hidden himself, as in the next verse; it is very probable, and indeed plain, that he was in this assembly at the first opening

of it. And knowing what Samuel had said and done to him, and perceiving in what way the lot was going concerning the same, the tribe of Benjamin being taken, he concluded how it would ensue, and therefore left the assembly, and hid himself.

There is no record of Matri anywhere. Saul was separated out from all of the people of the Benjamites. He is so unsure of himself that he has hidden away, rather than be proclaimed as king before all of his people.

1 Samuel 10:22 "Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff."

“Hid ... among the stuff: Overwhelmed, Saul had hidden himself in the military supplies.

We would have to say, he was a reluctant king. The question was answered by the LORD speaking through the Urim and the Thummim of the priest. The LORD knows exactly where he is. He was out where the wagon loads of provisions were. He was hiding. He cannot hide from the LORD.

1 Samuel 10:23 "And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward."

“Higher ... from his shoulders and upward”: Saul’s physical stature was impressive; being head and shoulders above the rest gave Saul a kingly presence.

When they brought Saul in, he was a head taller than any of the other Israelites.

1 Samuel 10:24 "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that [there is] none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king."

As to the height of his bodily stature; of which was in itself commendable in a king and some kind of indication of great endowments of mind.

"God save the king": Let the king live, to wit, live long and prosperously; for an afflicted life is reputed a kind of death, and is often so called. Hereby they accept and own him for their king, and promise subjection to him.

The physical appearance of Saul was striking. The fact that he was so tall made him appear to have the stature of a king. They readily accept him as their king, and begin to shout "God save the king".

1 Samuel 10:25 "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, 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."

“The manner of the kingdom”: Samuel reminded the people of the regulations governing the conduct of kings (according to Deut. 17:14-20).

As God’s judge and prophet, “Samuel” put in writing the ordinances of the newly established “kingdom” and deposited the document in the sanctuary of the “Lord.”

They have established a government, and these laws are the law of the land. This is like writing a constitution. This is the way the government will be run. Now that the people have been told that Saul is king, there is no need for them to stay. Samuel sends them home.

1 Samuel 10:26 "And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."

“Gibeah”: This was a city belonging to Benjamin (Judges 19:14). Gibeah has been excavated at the modern site of Tell-el-Ful, three miles north of Jerusalem. This city figured prominently in two separate periods of Old Testament history. It first appeared in Judges 19 and 20 as the site of a lewd and obscene crime. As the result of judgment, the city was destroyed (Judges 20:40); apparently, it was rebuilt after the fire. Later Gibeah was the home of Saul, first king of Israel (verse 26), who met a band of prophets at Gibeah after being anointed king (verses 5, 10). From Gibeah, Saul summoned the tribes of Israel to deliver Jabesh-gilead (11:1-11). Gibeah was the site of Saul’s war with the Philistines (13:2; 14:2, 16), apparently having become Saul’s capital (15:34; 22:6; 23:19). In many passages, it is even called “Gibeah of Saul” (11:4; Isa. 10:29).

“Whose hearts God had touched”: Valiant men who were eager to affirm God’s choice of Saul and, in response to a divine impulse, joined him.

It appears, from the verse above, that God moved upon the hearts of some of the men, and they came home with Saul dedicated to serving him. They would be willing to follow him completely.

1 Samuel 10:27 "But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace."

“Children of Belial”: Literally “sons of Belial” (see note on 2:12). Those who did not recognize Saul with the respect befitting a king.

(See the note on Judges 19:22.)

It seems from this Scripture, that the noble men who followed Saul did bring him presents to help him get started as king. We remember from other Bible studies, that the word "Belial" meant worthless or good for nothing. They were troublemakers. They did not want to follow Saul even if God had anointed him. Saul seemed to be a patient man at this point. He did not punish those, who did not believe in him. Perhaps it was because he had a little trouble believing in himself.

1 Samuel Chapter 10 Questions

1. What two things did Samuel do to Saul that showed he was anointing him as king?
2. What kind of oil was this?
3. Who was actually anointing Saul?
4. The first sign for Saul to watch for was what?
5. What was the good news these two men will give him?
6. Where is Rachel's sepulcher?
7. What would happen at the plain of Tabor?
8. What will these men give to Saul?
9. What would certainly prove to Saul, that he had been ordained of God?
10. The three men appear to him in the vicinity of _____.
11. What were they going to do with the two loaves of bread, before they met Saul?
12. Who will Saul meet, coming down from the high place?
13. What will they have with them?
14. What will they do, when they see Saul?
15. What will cause Saul to prophesy?
16. When Saul begins to prophesy, what else happens to him?
17. Who will come to Gilgal, and make the burnt offerings?
18. How long will Saul tarry there?
19. When Saul turned his back to Samuel to leave, God gave him _____.
20. When did the signs that Samuel prophesied to Saul happen?
21. What did the people, who knew Saul; ask when they saw him prophesy?
22. The school of prophesy had been started by _____.
23. _____ has nothing to do with prophecy.
24. Who was Saul's uncle, probably?
25. What really excites him, that Saul tells him?

26. What is the only thing Saul tells his uncle?
27. Samuel called all the people together unto the _____ at _____.
28. What did the LORD God of Israel remind them, He had done for them?
29. How did they return His blessings on them?
30. What are the people demanding?
31. When all the tribes stood before Samuel with their thousands, what tribe did he separate out?
32. When they asked for Saul, where was he?
33. The LORD answered them through the _____ and the _____.
34. When they brought him back, what made him stand out from everyone else?
35. How did the people feel about Saul as king?
36. This writing in verse 25, is like what?
37. Who went with Saul, when he went to Gibeah?
38. Who was against Saul?
39. What does "Belial" mean?
40. Why did Saul not punish these of Belial?