

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

I SAM. 9:25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. 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 shew thee the word of God.

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?

6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.

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 shew thee what thou shalt do.

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.

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.

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?

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?

13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

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.

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

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.

Saul Anointed King

Lesson Text: I Samuel 9:25-10:1, 6-16

Related Scriptures: I Samuel 16:1-13;
Numbers 11:24-30; I Samuel 19:18-24

TIME: 1043 B.C.

PLACE: Ramah; Gibeah

GOLDEN TEXT— “And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man” (I Samuel 10:6).

Lesson Exposition

SAUL CONSECRATED KING—I Sam. 9:25—10:1

Seeking donkeys (I Sam. 9:25-26). As this chapter opens, we are introduced to Saul. He was the son of Kish, “a mighty man of power” (vs. 1), meaning he was influential and wealthy. Saul was tall and handsome, just what a king was expected to be.

When Kish’s donkeys went astray, Saul and a servant were sent to look for them. Having been unsuccessful in their quest, the servant suggested that they go to Samuel and seek his advice.

As it turned out, the Lord had revealed to Samuel the previous day that a man was coming who was to be anointed king (I Sam. 9:15-17). When Saul arrived, he was invited to a sacrifice and feast with Samuel and was honored by the prophet.

The next day, Samuel prepared to send Saul on his way.

The selected king (I Sam. 9:27—10:1). As they walked together to the edge of the city, Samuel told Saul to have his servant go ahead of them so their conversation could be private. Exactly why this was to be done privately is unstated.

Taking a vial of oil, Samuel anointed Saul.

SAMUEL’S COMMISSION FOR SAUL—I Sam. 10:6-8

The Spirit promised (I Sam. 10:6-7). Before Saul left Samuel, the prophet told him that a number of things would occur. First, Saul would be informed that the donkeys had been found (vs. 2). Second, he would meet three men who would offer him food (vss. 3-4). Third, he would encounter a band of prophets who would prophesy (vs. 5). These were the “signs” (vs. 7) the Lord would give Saul, assuring him of God’s presence with him.

Saul was also promised that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him. This would enable him to carry out his mission. Moreover, Saul would be “turned into another man” (vs. 6)—literally “overturned” or “transformed.”

Sacrifices anticipated (I Sam. 10:8). Saul was further instructed to go ahead of Samuel to Gilgal to offer sacrifices. Saul was to wait there seven days until Samuel arrived. This may have been a test of his obedience.

SAUL'S CHANGE OF HEART—I Sam. 10:9-13

Signs confirmed (I Sam. 10:9). When Saul turned to leave, something extraordinary happened: "God gave him another heart." Concerning the aforementioned signs, "all those signs came to pass that day."

The Spirit falls (I Sam. 10:10-11). When Saul and his servant came to Gibeah, a group of prophets met them. When Saul met these prophets, "the Spirit of God came upon him" (I Sam. 10:10).

So remarkable was the change in Saul that people wondered aloud (I Sam. 10:11). Since we know nothing of this particular band of prophets, or the nature of their prophesying, it is difficult to know exactly what the response of the people meant. Some think these prophets were involved in some type of ecstatic speaking or otherwise bizarre behavior.

Saul is doubted (I Sam. 10:12-13). Not only did some think Saul's behavior strange, but one person also called into question the validity of the whole experience, even ridiculing Saul, asking, "But who is their father?" This statement probably means that "to be a prophet, one might be expected to have a father who is a prophet." (Bergen, *New American Commentary: 1 and 2 Samuel*, B& H).

Once Saul ceased to prophesy, which seems to have been a temporary phenomenon, he went on to the place of worship at Gibeah.

SAUL CONCEALS HIS CONSECRATION—I Sam. 10:14-16

A question (I Sam. 10:14-15).

Once Saul and his servant returned home, Saul's uncle asked where they had been.

Answering truthfully, Saul told his uncle, probably Ner (I Sam. 14:50), that they had been looking for Kish's lost donkeys. Saul

also told him they had visited Samuel the prophet.

Since visiting an esteemed spiritual leader like Samuel was likely not a normal occurrence for the average Israelite, Saul's uncle wanted more information concerning this visit. While this exchange might be somewhat normal under the circumstances, there was probably an unstated reason for Saul's uncle's inquiry concerning their recent activities.

A quandary (I Sam. 10:16). Once again, Saul answered truthfully by stating that Samuel had told them the donkeys had been found. Saul, however, said nothing about his private anointing as king of Israel. Time would tell whether Saul had the qualities to be an effective ruler.

—John Alva Owston.

QUESTIONS

1. What do we know about Saul's family background?
2. How was the loss of the donkeys providential?
3. Why do you think Samuel wanted to deliver God's message to Saul in private?
4. What is meant by Saul's being "turned into another man" (I Sam. 10:6)?
5. What was the point of Saul waiting seven days for Samuel?
6. What was the source of Saul's change of heart?
7. What do we know about the band of prophets Saul met?
8. Why did some people doubt that Saul had been prophesying?
9. What information did Saul's uncle want from him? Why?
10. Do you think Saul's answer to his uncle was dishonest?

—John Alva Owston.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. God can reach us no matter where we happen to be (I Sam. 9:25-27).
2. To be chosen by God for leadership is an honored but heavy responsibility (10:1).
3. God gives His chosen leaders the power they need for their service (vss. 6-7).
4. Believers must be obedient to God's Word (vss. 8-9).
5. God speaks to people of faith today through His Word in Scripture (vss. 10-13).
6. Sometimes it is best to stay quiet for a time to meditate on the details of God's call, even with those close to us (vss. 14-16).

—Wardell Miller.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is it important for believers to have Christian leaders who are obedient to the Holy Spirit (I Sam. 10:1)?
2. Should believers today, who have Christ's words and whose sins were paid for by the Lamb of God, look for fresh revelation beyond the Scriptures? Why or why not?
3. How dramatic a change should we expect to see in new believers' lives? Are some marks of change easier to mistake than others?
4. Describe the difference between a theocratic king's rule and the rule of a secular monarchy.
5. How do new converts become new people in Christ (cf. II Cor. 5:17)?
6. How can believers know that the Holy Spirit has changed them?

—Wardell Miller.

Golden Text Illuminated

“And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man” (I Samuel 10:6).

When we think of the context of this week's golden text, we may encounter a problem. The description of Saul's encounter with the Holy Spirit sounds remarkably like how He works in the conversion of New Testament believers (II Cor. 5:17). Yet Saul tends to be a rather doubtful example of even an Old Testament believer.

Saul's life and reign as the first king of Israel began with promise but quickly spiraled downward. If, as Samuel testified, Saul actually became “another man,” why did his transformation not bear more consistently righteous fruit?

Leaving aside the question of whether or not Saul represents a true believer who exercised saving faith, I think our best starting point for understanding him is Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 10:11-12: “Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” As many of the greatest writers since Bible times have understood, Saul is a cautionary example for us, as are all great tragic figures in history.

We can all benefit from being mindful of such a humbling admonition. But hope can be readily found in the sustaining grace of our gracious and loving God (cf. John 10:28-29; I Cor. 10:13).