

Israel had asked for Samuel to give them a king, and in this lesson the LORD brings to Samuel the man He has chosen to be that king. It's worth noting that while God will later choose a man after his own heart to be king (David), Saul, the man that the LORD chooses in response to Israel's request for king, is a man after the people's heart. Saul looked impressive on the outside but inside he was self-willed and self-serving.

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### 1 Samuel 9

1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

Samuel has sent the people away so that he can consult with the LORD about who should be anointed as the king that the people have requested. The narrative now turns to the man whom the LORD has chosen. We are introduced to a man named Kish and are given his family lineage. We are told that Kish was a "mighty man of power." The Hebrew word translated "power" refers to wealth as well as strength. Apparently Kish was a wealthy and influential man.

2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people.

**"And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly [good-looking; handsome]"** – The narrative then turns the focus upon Kish's son, Saul. Saul was an impressive and handsome young man in appearance.

**"and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he"** – He was not just handsome, but he was the most handsome man in Israel.

**"from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people"** – Saul was so tall that other men only came up to his shoulders at best. It would not be hard to pick Saul out of a crowd because he would tower above everyone else. The point of this description is to show us how physically impressive of a man that Saul was. He was the Arnold Schwarzenegger of his day.

**Verses 3-14:** The asses of Kish had wandered off and he sends his son Saul and a servant to go looking for them. After searching throughout the countryside for many days with no luck, they find themselves near the city where Samuel was residing and the servant suggested that they should ask Samuel where to find the asses. When they arrive in the city they discover that there was a feast and sacrifice occurring that day being overseen by Samuel.

15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, 16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him *to be* captain 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.

**"Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came saying, To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin"** – The LORD was in control of the circumstances, arranging the situation of the missing asses in order to bring Saul to Samuel at the proper time. He notifies Samuel that Saul will be arriving the next day.

**"and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines"** – Saul will be the man that the LORD has chosen to be the king that the people had requested. Saul will be given the responsibility of leading Israel to victory over the Philistines and freedom from their oppression with the help of the LORD.

**"for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me"** – The LORD saw the suffering of His people and heard their prayers for deliverance. He is now responding by calling a man to be the tool that He will use to help them.

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

When Samuel saw Saul the LORD confirms that this is the man that He had chosen to be king of Israel.

**Verses 18-27:** Samuel tells Saul not to worry about the asses that he has been searching for over the past three days, because they had been found. He then invites Saul to the feast and seats him in the place of honor. Saul spends the night at Samuel's house and the next day Samuel escorts him out of the city in order to talk privately with him and reveal the will of the LORD to him.

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### 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?

**"Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him"** – Anointing someone with oil was the method of ordaining a person for an office. Aaron and his sons were anointed to be priests (Exo. 30:30), and anointing with oil became the way men were ordained as kings.

**"and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"** – Perhaps Saul had a surprised and/or questioning look on his face since he did not understand why Samuel was anointing him. Samuel then explains that the reason for the anointing is because the LORD had chosen him to be the king of Israel.

**Verses 2-16:** As a sign to confirm that the anointing was from the LORD, Samuel describes what will happen to Saul during his journey home. He will encounter men who will tell him that his father's asses have been found. He will then encounter three men carrying three kids, three loaves of bread and a bottle of wine and they will give him two loaves of bread. Finally, he will meet a group of prophets and the Spirit of the LORD will come upon him and cause him to prophesy, enabling him for the responsibility of being king. Samuel then instructs Saul to continue to Gilgal where Samuel will meet him in seven days to show him what to do next.

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17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;

Samuel told Saul to meet him at Gilgal, which would be the place where Saul will later be officially declared king (1 Sam. 11:14-15). Perhaps Samuel wanted to meet with Saul first and show him how they would announce that he would be king to Israel and how he would be declared king at Gilgal. Now Samuel calls the people to Mizpeh in order to make the announcement to Israel.

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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:

Samuel prefaces the announcement with a reminder of what the LORD has done for Israel. He has freed them, not only from bondage in Egypt, but also from all nations that would want to enslave and oppress them.

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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.

Samuel makes the point that Israel has rejected the LORD, Who has been their deliverer, as being their supreme sovereign and instead want a human king to rule over them. Samuel is showing them that the LORD is giving them exactly what they have asked for and prepares to present this new king to them. Representatives of the tribes of Israel will come before the LORD and people will be narrowed down until the king is revealed. The choice was likely made by casting lots in order to demonstrate that the choice was the LORD's and not man's.

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

Each group was chosen and then further subdivided until Saul, the son of Kish, was left. However, Saul could not be found. Saul may have suffered from low self-esteem and hid himself because did not like being the center of attention. Saul's behavior years later, such as his intense jealousy of David and fear of losing his kingdom to him, is further evidence of his insecurity and lack of self-esteem.

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22 Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. 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.

Since they did not know where to find Saul, they ask the LORD where to look. The LORD answered, saying that Saul was hiding "among the stuff" (military equipment). They send men to find and bring Saul out and the first thing the people noticed about Saul was the fact that he was much taller than the rest of the men of Israel.

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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.

Samuel directs the people's attention to Saul as being the one whom the LORD had chosen to be king. They are impressed with his tall stature and celebrate their new king. However, the LORD had given them a king that would appeal to them. They were easily impressed with superficial features such as Saul's physical height. Years later, the LORD will choose a man after His own heart (David) who will be the kind of king that Israel should have desired. Instead, the LORD gives them a king after their own heart and this king will eventually be rejected by the LORD and die in shame.

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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.

Samuel goes over the responsibilities and the extent of the authority of a king and writes it down for later reference. Samuel likely included what the LORD had already given through Moses (Deut. 17:14-20) as well as new information given him by the LORD. Samuel then dismisses the people at the end of the meeting.

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

At this time there is no capital city nor palace for a king, so Saul goes to his home in Gibeah until such time as duty called for him to exercise his authority as king. God touched the hearts of a group of men to go with him to assist him in performing his duties as king. However, there were also "children of Belial" (evil, worthless men) who did not accept Saul as the LORD's choice and thus did not recognize him as their king (v. 27). Despite their disrespect, Saul did nothing to correct them.

**Chapter 11:** Saul's first official act as king came when the Ammonites threatened Jabesh-gilead. The inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead sent messengers to Saul asking for help and he responded by gathering an army together and when he arrived the next day, he attacked and defeated the Ammonites. The LORD gave Saul the victory and validated His choice of Saul as king. Samuel called the people to Gilgal in order to officially make Saul king and to make offerings to the LORD in gratitude for the victory over the Ammonites.